

■ June • July • August 2004

# OUR DAILY BREAD



*Be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.  
See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit  
of the earth.*

*James 5:7*



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# OUR DAILY BREAD®

**For Personal and Family Devotions**

*Since 1956*

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June 1  
Tuesday

## VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION

READ:  
Matthew 4:1-11

God . . . will not allow  
you to be tempted  
beyond what you are  
able, but . . . will also  
make the way of escape.  
—1 Corinthians 10:13

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ 2 Chronicles 15-16  
■ John 12:27-50

Wanda Johnson, a single mother with five children, was on her way to the pawn shop, where she was hoping to get a loan of \$60 for her TV set. Then something bizarre happened. As an armored truck filled with sacks of money drove past her, its rear door flew open, and a bag dropped out. Wanda stopped and picked up the sack. When she counted the cash, she found that it totaled \$160,000.

A battle raged in her soul. That money would pay all her bills and provide for the needs of her children. But it wasn't hers to keep.

After a fierce 4-hour struggle with her moral convictions, Wanda called the police and turned in the money. Her sense of doing the right thing won a victory over the temptation to keep what wasn't hers.

How strong is your ethical fiber? Will it break down if you are faced with an enticing chance to do something wrong? Adam and Eve, as well as Jesus, were attacked by Satan on three fronts: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). Our first parents succumbed to the serpent's solicitation (Genesis 3:1-6). Jesus did not (Matthew 4:1-11).

No matter what evil is pressuring us, let's follow Jesus' example and do what's right. —Vernon Grounds

*Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin—  
Each victory will help you some other to win;  
Fight manfully onward, dark passions subdue,  
Look ever to Jesus—He will carry you through.* —Palmer

**To withstand temptation, stand with Christ.**

June 2  
Wednesday

## PORCUPINE PEOPLE

READ:

1 John 4:16-21

---

This commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.  
—1 John 4:21

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ 2 Chronicles 17-18  
■ John 13:1-20

commands us to love one another—including the porcupine types. And in our honest moments, we have to admit that we have quills too.

John wrote, "He who loves God must love his brother also" (1 John 4:21). To do this, we need to ask God to help us "relax our quills," even when other people are prickly. The Holy Spirit will help us stop being so defensive or critical or controlling, and enable us to love our Christian brothers and sisters. It's the way we show the world that we love God (John 13:35). —Dave Egner

*Some people can be difficult to love  
And so we do not even try to care,*

*But God says, "Love them just as I've loved you—  
You'll bring Me glory as My love you share." —Cetas*

---

**God loves you and me—let's love each other.**

Deep in a Wyoming canyon I came across the biggest porcupine I've ever seen. As he lumbered toward me, I watched him closely and gave him plenty of room. I was not about to get near a guy whose quills looked like missiles. No wonder he was alone!

But he's not alone all the time. Every November and December, porcupines get close enough to produce offspring. During that time they choose to relax their quills, then they return to their prickly selves.

In nearly every church, there will be a porcupine or two, with sharp quills of criticism or sarcasm or arrogance. We want to avoid them, but God places us in communities of believers for fellowship. He com-

June 3  
Thursday

## DEATH CLOCK

READ:

1 Peter 4:7-11

---

The end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.

—1 Peter 4:7

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ 2 Chronicles 19-20

■ John 13:21-38

There is a Web site that claims to predict when you will die. After you answer a series of questions, your projected date of death appears along with a digital clock counting down the number of seconds you have left to live. It's all based on current life-expectancy charts, but seeing it on a computer screen makes it more vivid. As the site says, it's "the Internet's friendly reminder that life is slipping away."

God in His wisdom doesn't tell us the day of our death. Nor do we know the day of Christ's return. The Bible urges us to live for Christ and be prepared for either event. Peter wrote, "The end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your

prayers. . . . Have fervent love for one another . . . . Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:7-10).

Jesus said, "Be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. . . . Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes" (Luke 12:40,43).

As Christians, we need not panic as we see our time slipping away. Instead, let's live every moment for Christ and be prepared to meet Him today. —David McCasland

*The godless ponder death with fear—  
For what's ahead they cannot see;  
But those who put their faith in Christ  
Anticipate eternity. —Sper*

---

**Be ready for your last moment  
by being ready every moment.**

June 4  
Friday

## THE REBUKE FROM A FRIEND

READ:

Galatians 2:11-20

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Faithful are the wounds  
of a friend, but the  
kisses of an enemy  
are deceitful.

—Proverbs 27:6

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ 2 Chronicles 21-22

■ John 14

freely eaten with them, but after some Jews from Jerusalem came to the Antioch church, he shunned the Gentiles, fearing the Jews' disapproval. I imagine that he felt shame, but he apparently accepted the rebuke gracefully and changed his ways. He knew that Paul was a true friend who loved him. And in later years he referred to him as "our beloved brother Paul" (2 Peter 3:15).

If you must rebuke someone, do it gently. If you are rebuked, avoid an angry response. You may be getting a needed "faithful wound" from a friend. —Herb Vander Lugt

*A friend will gently say what's true,*

*Although it may cause pain;*

*He's really thinking of our good*

*And what we stand to gain. —D. De Haan*

---

**A true friend will put a finger on your faults  
without rubbing them in.**

Never will I forget the rebuke I received from a friend when I was 17. He walked into the back of the butcher shop where I worked and saw me laughing at an indecent cartoon. He said he had admired my Christian character, and was surprised that I would laugh at something sinful and degrading. Instantly a wave of embarrassment swept over me. I shamefully admitted that I had sinned.

It's not pleasant to be rebuked, nor is it easy to rebuke another person. So I can imagine that the apostle Paul didn't like confronting Peter (Galatians 2:11). But he felt he had to, because Peter's hypocritical behavior was hurtful and confusing to the Gentile converts at Antioch. Peter had

June 5  
Saturday

## THE PRUNING

READ:

John 15:1-11

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Every branch that bears  
fruit He prunes, that it  
may bear more fruit.  
—John 15:2

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ 2 Chronicles 23-24  
■ John 15

waiting for God to intervene when everything seems hopeless and we have no friends to help us.

But the pruning knife is guided by a loving set of hands. The Master Vinedresser knows what we can take, and He knows what we can become—more loving, joyful, tranquil, tolerant, kind, dependable, gentle, poised—stronger and better than we are today.

We must not shrink from the knife but trust the hand that holds it. Our Father in heaven has a purpose—to produce good fruit in us. —David Roper

*The Master is seeking a harvest  
In lives He's redeemed by His blood;  
He seeks for the fruit of the Spirit,  
And works that will glorify God. —Lehman*

---

**Fruitbearing + Pruning = More Fruit**

In every vineyard, a vinedresser prunes the branches so they will produce more fruit. In a spiritual sense, our heavenly Father must deal with us in a similar way at times—by pruning our lives. It isn't only the dead branches that have to go, but sometimes even the living and vital ones must be cut back so that better and more bountiful fruit may grow.

Many different circumstances may serve as a pruning knife in the hands of the Master Vinedresser. It may be the rejecting gesture, the unkind word, or no word at all. It could be the frustration of living in a constant state of noise and confusion, with daily duties and no chance to find a quiet place to call our own. Or it might be



June 6  
Sunday

## THE RING

READ:  
Philippians 1:12-17

---

The things which  
happened to me have  
actually turned out  
for the furtherance  
of the gospel.  
— Philippians 1:12

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ 2 Chronicles 25–27  
■ John 16

I'm not much for jewelry. A wedding ring was all I ever wanted—until now. Next to my wedding ring, on the little finger of my left hand, rests a simple silver band. It's my daughter Melissa's.

Soon after Mell died in a car accident in June 2002, just 6 weeks short of her 18th birthday, I was in her bedroom when I found the ring. I recalled having seen it on her beautiful hand.

I slipped it on and was surprised that it fit. Now I wear it all the time. Here's why: I can look at it or touch it and feel close to my precious daughter. Knowing that it graced her finger warms my heart when I miss her the most.

But there's another reason I wear her ring. I want people to notice it and

ask me about it. Then I can tell them of Melissa and her life of love, faith, and fun. I hope it opens conversations that will allow me to introduce people to Melissa's Savior, and mine.

The apostle Paul used his chains—his imprisonment—to advance the gospel (Philippians 1:12). It wasn't that he enjoyed being incarcerated, but he knew it could be turned to good purposes. It's like the ring. I wish it wasn't mine; I wish Melissa was still enjoying it. But she's not, and I want this tragic circumstance to bring glory to God.

Is there a loss in your life that God can use? —Dave Branon

*Our God works to transform us  
Till life on earth is done;  
He uses trials and testings  
To make us like His Son. —Sper*

---

**God can transform a tragedy into a triumph.**

June 7  
Monday

## VALUE TEST

READ:

Luke 6:46-49

---

Why do you call Me  
"Lord, Lord," and not  
do the things which I  
say? —Luke 6:46

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ 2 Chronicles 28-29

■ John 17

Robert Ginnett, a researcher at the Center for Creative Leadership in Colorado Springs, has found that the values we claim to have are not as closely linked to our actual behavior as we might like to believe.

One business executive, who said his 5-year-old daughter was the most important part of his life, realized that he usually went to work before she got up in the morning and often returned home after she was in bed at night. So to spend time with her, he took her to work with him one Saturday. After looking around his office, she asked, "Daddy, is this where you live?" He may have acknowledged that his daughter was important, but his behavior revealed what he truly valued.

In our relationship with Christ, He asks for our obedience, not a warm feeling or a statement of belief. He asked those following Him, "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Jesus illustrated His point with the parable of the wise and foolish builders (vv.47-49). The rock-solid foundation of the wise builder's house illustrates the result of our obedience to God. This honors Christ and enables us to withstand the storms of life.

What we *do*, more than anything we *say*, reveals what we truly value the most. —David McCasland

*Fill up each hour with what will last;*

*Buy up the moments as they go;*

*The life above, when this is past,*

*Is the ripe fruit of life below. —Bonar*

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**To show that you value eternity,  
make good use of your time.**

June 8  
Tuesday

## PEACEMAKERS

READ:

1 Samuel 25:14-35

---

Blessed are the  
peacemakers, for they  
shall be called sons of  
God. — Matthew 5:9

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ 2 Chronicles 30-31

■ John 18:1-18

Abigail was a remarkable woman! She was a true peacemaker whose courage spared the future king of Israel from committing a terrible sin. Here's her story:

David had been forced to live in the countryside to escape King Saul's jealous wrath. A group of about 600 men and their families had gathered around him. For several months they camped near Carmel where the flocks of Nabal (Abigail's husband) were grazing. David's men had helped Nabal's shepherds protect the sheep from robbers. Now the shearing time had come, and David sent messengers to request some compensation from Nabal, who was a wealthy man. But he refused and treated David's men with disdain.

In anger David rashly decided to kill Nabal and all the men in his household. When Abigail heard what had happened, she quickly gathered a large supply of food, intercepted David and his fighting men, and humbly apologized for her husband's surly behavior. David immediately realized that she had prevented him from carrying out a vengeful decision, and he praised God (1 Samuel 25:32).

Are we as quick to resolve a conflict? Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9). —Herb Vander Lugt

*How blest are those who persevere*

*To bring a conflict to an end;*

*And if the peace of Christ takes hold,*

*An enemy becomes a friend. —D. De Haan*

---

**You can be a peacemaker  
if you have God's peace in your heart.**

June 9  
Wednesday

## FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

READ:

John 15:13-15

---

I have called you  
friends, for all things  
that I heard from My  
Father I have made  
known to you.  
—John 15:15

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ 2 Chronicles 32-33  
■ John 18:19-40

Page through an old-time hymnal and notice how often the songwriters referred to the blessing of God's friendship. Stop and think about what that really means.

Yes, it's a blessing to have human friends who enrich our lives. A devoted friend, as Proverbs 17:17 tells us, "loves at all times," standing with us steadfastly through life's sunshine and storm.

Indeed, some of us know gratefully by our own experience that "there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24). We identify with David and Jonathan when we read about the bond between them (1 Samuel 18:1).

Friendship on a human level is wonderful, but what about friendship with God? It's an incredible blessing to have the Creator and Sustainer of our universe as a friend. Although worshiped by countless heavenly hosts, He takes great joy in His relationship with us.

Are we neglecting the privilege of walking with God, the greatest of all friends? Today, with gratitude and awe, let's spend time with Him in prayer and in reading His Word.

Remember that Jesus called His followers friends (John 15:15). What an honor that we can enjoy friendship with God! —Vernon Grounds

*I've found a Friend, oh, such a Friend!  
He loved me ere I knew Him;  
He drew me with the cords of love,  
And thus He bound me to Him. —Small*

---

**When you spend time with God,  
you invest in a forever friendship.**

June 10  
Thursday

## ENOUGH OF EVERYTHING

READ:

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

God is able to make all  
grace abound toward  
you, that you . . . may  
have an abundance for  
every good work.  
—2 Corinthians 9:8

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ 2 Chronicles 34-36

■ John 19:1-22

I need (2 Corinthians 9:8).

The apostle Paul was not saying that we have enough grace to do anything we want to do. God does not offer us a blank check. No, Paul was giving us the assurance that we have enough grace to do whatever God has called us to do—whether it is to give money for the cause of the gospel, as the Corinthians were doing (v.7), or to give love to a difficult teenager, an indifferent spouse, or an aging parent.

Whatever the task, God will make sure we have “an abundance for every good work” (v.8). —David Roper

*God uses us to do His work*

*If we will just obey;*

*He freely gives His love and power*

*To serve Him every day. —Sper*

---

**God's call to a task includes His strength  
to complete it.**

Randy, our first child, went off to kindergarten with a 10-cent coin in his pocket to buy a carton of milk to go with his lunch. When he came home that afternoon, his mother asked if he had purchased the milk. “No,” he replied, bursting into tears. “The milk was 5 cents and I only had a dime.”

How often I have responded to demands placed upon me with the same childish understanding. According to God's Word, I have all the resources I need at my disposal—more than enough to meet my needs—and yet I'm reluctant to act because I fear that I won't have enough. But the Bible assures me that God has provided me with every blessing in abundance. By His grace, I have everything

June 11  
Friday

## STAY WITHIN GOD'S LIMITS

READ:  
Ephesians 5:15-21

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See then that you walk  
circumspectly, not as  
fools but as wise.  
—Ephesians 5:15

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Ezra 1-2  
■ John 19:23-42

One of life's greatest enjoyments for Suzannah Worl is riding her Harley-Davidson motorcycle. In a devotional article for Covenant Publications, she wrote about cruising the streets of Chicago with her friends late one summer night. They were riding along the shore of Lake Michigan, enjoying the bright moonlight and gentle breeze off the water.

Suddenly the lead motorcyclist took off and several of the group went with him, reaching speeds of 100 miles an hour. Suzannah was tempted to join them—but she didn't. She knew it was not safe and it was against the law. So she held back, continuing at normal speed.

Sometimes the way others live seems far more attractive and exciting than our Christian life. We're tempted to disobey God's commands or compromise principles from His Word. But we are called to live each day with self-discipline and spiritual discernment. The apostle Paul said, "Walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise" (Ephesians 5:15).

We need to ask the Lord for His help so that we'll see situations through His eyes and make wise choices. As we obey Him and stay within His limits, we will find true joy and lasting satisfaction. —Dave Egner

*Living for Jesus a life that is true,  
Striving to please Him in all that I do;  
Yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and free,  
This is the pathway of blessing for me.* —Chisholm

---

**The wise know God's limits—  
fools know no bounds.**

June 12  
Saturday

## FOR SINNERS ONLY

READ:  
Ephesians 2:1-10

By grace you have been saved through faith . . . ; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.  
— Ephesians 2:8-9

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Ezra 3-5  
■ John 20

Many non-Christians know the hymn "Amazing Grace" but may not know what *grace* means. One day when evangelist D. L. Moody was studying the meaning of God's grace, he dashed into the street and shouted to the first man he saw, "Do you know grace?" Mystified, the man replied, "Grace who?" No doubt Moody then explained grace—that God has compassion on sin-sick people and freely offers them forgiveness and new life through faith in Christ.

I heard of a man who had lived a troubled life and died without understanding the message of God's grace. A minister had talked to him and encouraged him to come to church, but his response was, "I'm too undeserving." He didn't know that God's grace is for the undeserving.

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he bluntly described their pre-Christian lives as being "dead in trespasses and sins" (2:1). Then he used two hope-filled words: *but God* (v.4). They introduce God's mercy and grace that provide forgiveness and new life through Christ. Salvation is through faith, not works, so no one can boast (vv.8-9).

Let's help others to understand that God's salvation is for sinners only—and that includes all of us. That's what makes God's grace so amazing! —Joanie Yoder

*Amazing grace! How sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost but now am found,  
Was blind but now I see. —Newton*

---

**The first step to receiving eternal life  
is to admit that we don't deserve it.**

June 13  
Sunday

## WE NEED ONE ANOTHER

READ:  
Hebrews 10:19-25

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As His custom was,  
[Jesus] went into the  
synagogue on the  
Sabbath day.  
—Luke 4:16

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Ezra 6-8  
■ John 21

If recent polls can be trusted, an upsurge of Lone Ranger spirituality is occurring in the United States. Church attendance is down. Biblical beliefs are being abandoned. More and more of our fellow citizens are looking inward, online, and out-of-doors for the uplift they once sought in church sanctuaries.

How different from Jesus! He made it His practice to join in synagogue services regularly (Luke 4:16). But today, people no longer take Him as an example. They settle for what is loosely called "spirituality" and try to nurture their souls without the timeless traditions of congregational praise, prayer, biblical instruction, and edifying fellowship.

To gather regularly with other worshipers is an uplifting source of comfort, inspiration, and emotional strength. The Bible urges us not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together" (Hebrews 10:25).

We should, of course, have regular devotional times by ourselves. Just as surely, we need the blessing of uniting with other believers for worship and fellowship. We need to spend time together "in order to stir up love and good works" (v.24). We need to make it our habit to worship with others. We need one another. —Vernon Grounds

*We each can have sweet fellowship with Jesus  
As through the Word we learn to trust Him more;  
But we must also meet with one another  
As in His name we worship and adore. —Hess*

---

**Christians are like coals of fire—together, they glow;  
apart, they grow cold.**



June 14  
Monday

## ASCENDED!

READ:

2 Corinthians 5:1-8

---

We are . . . well  
pleased rather to be  
absent from the body  
and to be present  
with the Lord.

—2 Corinthians 5:8

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Ezra 9–10

■ Acts 1

Joseph Parker (1830–1902) was a beloved English preacher. When his wife died, he didn't have the customary wording inscribed on her gravestone. Instead of the word *died* followed by the date of her death, he chose the word *ascended*.

Parker found great comfort in being reminded that though his wife's body had been placed in the grave, the "real" Mrs. Parker had been transported to heaven and into the presence of her Savior. When Parker himself died, his friends made sure that his gravestone read:

ASCENDED NOVEMBER 28, 1902

When a believing loved one dies, or when we ourselves face the process of dying, there's great comfort in the fact that "to be absent from the body" is "to be present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8).

Death for us is not a dark journey into the unknown. It is not a lonely walk into a strange and friendless place. Rather, it is a glorious transition from the trials of earth into the joys of heaven, where we will be reunited with our loved ones in Christ who have gone before. Best of all, we will enjoy the presence of our Lord forever.

Yes, when a believer dies, the body is buried but not the soul. It has ascended! —Richard De Haan

*Oh, how blessed is the promise*

*When our spirit is set free:*

*To be absent from the body*

*Means to live, O Lord, with Thee! —Bosch*

---

**For the Christian, death is the doorway to Glory.**

June 15  
Tuesday

## PRAYING AND WAITING

READ:  
Nehemiah 1:5-11

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Rest in the LORD, and  
wait patiently for Him.  
—Psalm 37:7

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Nehemiah 1-3

■ Acts 2:1-21

A Christian couple was deeply distressed because their married son and his family had quit going to church and were giving God no place in their lives. As their friend, I advised them to continue showing love, to pray, and to avoid starting arguments. But at the family's annual Christmas gathering, the father gave his son a lecture in the presence of the other siblings. The son and his family left in anger and broke off all contact with his parents.

It's hard to rely on prayer alone when you want something to happen right now. But that is what Nehemiah did. He was distraught by the news that the Israelites in Jerusalem were in grave danger (Nehemiah 1:3-4). He

was a man with great leadership ability and in a favorable position to receive help from the king he served, so he was eager to help his people. But he knew that he could be executed for coming into the presence of a Persian king without being invited. Therefore, though he had asked God to give him the opportunity immediately, he trusted God enough to wait. Four months later, the king opened the door for him to make his request (2:1,4).

It's not always easy to be patient, but God can be trusted. Wait patiently for Him. —Herb Vander Lugt

*Praying, resting, waiting, trusting—*

*These are words that tell a story;*

*As we wait for God to lead us,*

*He responds, "Just seek My glory." —Hess*

---

**Delay is not denial—pray on!**

## GROWING IN OLD AGE

READ:

**Psalm 92:12-15**

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**They shall still bear  
fruit in old age; they  
shall be fresh and  
flourishing.**

—Psalm 92:14

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Nehemiah 4-6

■ Acts 2:22-47

We have a gnarled, ancient plum tree in our backyard that has seen better days. Its bark is dark and creased with age, its limbs are sparse and spindly, and it leans about 45 degrees to the west. Two years ago I had to cut off some branches on one side and the tree lost its symmetry.

I thought we had lost it for sure several winters ago when we had a stretch of sub-zero weather. The man who sprays our trees said he believed it was dead. Yet it came to life that spring and continues to do so every year.

Each April that old tree shrugs off the winter and puts out blossoms—fragrant pink flowers that grow profusely and beautify our yard. As I write this article, I can smell its sweetness in the air.

That plum tree endures because it has roots that tap deep into the soil. It draws its strength and nourishment from hidden subterranean sources.

And so it is with us. Our ability to endure—no, to flourish—is dependent on our being rooted in Christ. Those who read His Word, reflect on it, and pray it into their lives bring forth the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), even into old age. As Psalm 92:14 says, “They shall be fresh and flourishing.” —David Roper

*Our faltering steps and ebbing strength*

*Reveal life as a fading page;*

*Yet holding firm to Christ in faith*

*Keeps hope alive at any age. —D. De Haan*

---

**Better than counting your years  
is making all your years count.**

June 17  
Thursday

## WHAT MOTIVATES US?

READ:

1 Thessalonians 2:3-9

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Even so we speak,  
not as pleasing men,  
but God who tests  
our hearts.

—1 Thessalonians 2:4

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Nehemiah 7-9

■ Acts 3

My wife and I received a notice that we had won a prize of either \$1,000 dollars in cash or \$250 in vouchers. When we arrived at the collection site, we were told that to be eligible, we would have to sit through a 90-minute presentation.

As we listened, we learned that we could receive vacation accommodations for 25 years at today's prices, which would amount to about \$15,000 in savings. But to enjoy this privilege, we had to pay a membership fee of \$5,200. We declined the offer but were given some discount vouchers, which we realized we'd probably never use.

Reflecting on that experience, my wife and I wondered why we had endured what had become a 3-hour

presentation. What had motivated us? We wanted to be polite, but we also had to admit we were partly motivated by greed.

Wrong motives can even slip into our service for the Lord. Paul wrote to the believers at Thessalonica: "You remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you" (1 Thessalonians 2:9). He had the right to receive financial help from them, but he didn't want to be accused of unworthy motives.

What motivates us? Let's learn from Paul's example, remembering that God tests our hearts. —Albert Lee

*You know me, O Lord, for who I am,*

*My motives are open to You;*

*Oh, help me to live as Jesus did—*

*With motives both noble and true. —Sper*

---

**The world sees what we do—God sees why we do it.**

June 18  
Friday

## PAINT SPECKS

READ:

1 John 1:5-2:2

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If we confess our sins,  
He is faithful and just  
to forgive us our sins  
and to cleanse us from  
all unrighteousness.  
—1 John 1:9

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Nehemiah 10-11

■ Acts 4:1-22

white lies, selfish anger, small hypocrisies, and muddy motives stand out vividly. And they are in all of us to some degree.

How perceptive was the apostle John! He wrote, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1 John 1:8). But thank God, "If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (2:1). When we confess our sins, He intercedes with the Father on our behalf.

When we confess our shortcomings, God cleanses us—even those tiny specks we don't always see. —Dennis De Haan

*Search out in me all hidden sin,  
And may Thy purity within  
So cleanse my life that it may be  
A temple wholly fit for Thee. —Swallen*

Pushing a paint roller high overhead had produced a shower of fine droplets that left tiny white specks on my glasses. Although they were noticeable to others, I was not aware of them. But one morning as I came to work, the angle of the bright sunlight through the lenses of my glasses suddenly made those tiny specks visible and annoying.

So it is with some of our small moral imperfections. Others can see them, but we can't. Then, as we study God's Word, the true light of the Lord Jesus Christ shines on us, and our moral flaws become alarmingly visible. His pure character, genuine love, and unmixed motives reveal specks of sinfulness in everything we do. Little

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**Detecting sin is the first step to deliverance from sin.**

June 19  
Saturday

## SHARKS!

READ:  
Psalm 3

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You, O LORD, are  
a shield for me.  
—Psalm 3:3

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Nehemiah 12-13  
■ Acts 4:23-37

The thought of being surrounded by sharks is not pleasant. I've spent enough time fishing in the Gulf of Mexico, I've read enough articles about their razor-sharp teeth, and I've seen enough films of shark attacks to know how dangerous they can be. But I've also been surrounded by sharks and felt perfectly safe.

Sea World in Florida has an underwater exhibit that allows you to be in a tank with thousands of pounds of living sharks. A plexiglass corridor makes it possible for you to pass through an aquarium housing scores of them. Guided tours allow you to enter the world of these predators, to sense their presence and power, and yet to be safely shielded from attack.

David had the experience of being in "deep water" surrounded by predators. But as a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14), he had learned to let the Lord be his protection. What was his secret? David brought his fears to the Lord (Psalm 3:1). He refused to listen to those who said that God would not help him (v.2). He even learned to go to sleep (v.5), confident that nothing could touch him without the Lord's permission. David found his refuge in God (v.8).

Father, give us that same confidence. Teach us to trust You as our shield and defender. —Mart De Haan

*Fear not, I am with thee—O be not dismayed,  
For I am thy God, I will still give thee aid;  
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,  
Upheld by My gracious, omnipotent hand.* —Keith

---

**Safety is not the absence of danger  
but the presence of God.**

June 20  
Sunday

## A FATHER'S BLESSING

READ:

1 Peter 3:8-12

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Be tenderhearted,  
be courteous; not  
returning evil for  
evil . . . , but on the  
contrary blessing.  
—1 Peter 3:8-9

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Esther 1-2  
■ Acts 5:1-21

A man who was grieving the death of his father said, "I am crying not only for my father, but for me. His death means that I'll never hear the words I always wanted to hear from him: that he was proud of me, proud of the family I've raised and the life I've lived."

Instead of repeating his father's mistake, the man later gave his own son the words of encouragement he himself had never heard, saying he was proud of him and the life he had made.

Too often, tension between fathers and children are left unresolved. Old wounds remain unhealed. We are unwilling to forgive the angry words and hurts from the past. But for the sake of ourselves and our families, we need to do what we can to dismantle the walls of separation between us.

How can we begin? The Bible's command for all our relationships is: "Love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous, not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing . . . Turn away from evil and do good; . . . seek peace and pursue it" (1 Peter 3:8-9,11).

Let's determine by God's grace to break the cycle of anger and give our children what they long to hear from us—words of blessing and love. —David McCasland

*Our children need to know we care,  
That when they need us we'll be there;  
For deep within they need to hear  
That they are loved by someone dear.* —D. De Haan

---

**The best thing you spend on your children  
is your time.**

June 21  
Monday

## "APATHEISTS"

READ:  
Revelation 3:14-19

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Because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

—Revelation 3:16

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Esther 3-5

■ Acts 5:22-42

Most people profess belief in God, meaning they are theists. True atheism is a rarity.

Recently, however, it has been suggested that we need a new term for the multitude who are theists but are indifferent to God in daily living. They ought to be called *apatheists*. That word is built on the noun *apathy*, which means "indifference," a sort of sluggish unconcern. And sadly, whatever belief an individual professes, he may be living as an apatheist. His faith may make only a minimal difference in his behavior.

The apostle John recorded that Jesus described the church at Laodicea as neither hot nor cold (Revelation 3:16). They were lukewarm or, as we might

say, they were apatheists.

What about those of us who profess faith in Jesus? Are we lukewarm? We pray, but is our praying a mere obligation? We attend church and may even engage in some form of Christian service. Yet is all of that a matter of routine, like brushing our teeth or cleaning our house? Have we lost our first love, the zeal we had early in our spiritual journey?

Today, let's make the psalmist's prayer our own: "Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?" (Psalm 85:6). —Vernon Grounds

*Revive us again,*

*Fill each heart with Thy love,*

*May each soul be rekindled*

*With fire from above.* —Mackay

---

**Without a heart aflame for God,  
we cannot shine for Jesus.**



June 22  
Tuesday

## "FOLLOW ME"

READ:  
Mark 3:13-19

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Jesus said to them,  
"Follow Me . . . ."  
They immediately left  
their nets and followed  
Him. — Mark 1:17-18

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Esther 6-8  
■ Acts 6

When the United States launched its space program in 1958, seven men were chosen to become the first astronauts. Imagine the excitement of Scott Carpenter, Gordon Cooper, John Glenn, Gus Grissom, Walter Schirra, Alan Shepard, and Deke Slayton. They were selected to go where no one had ever gone before.

Yet, as astronauts they knew they would face unforeseen dangers, challenges, and trials. Each of them realized that the thrill of being chosen was tempered with the fear of the unknown future.

Imagine another set of men who were chosen for an important mission: the 12 apostles Jesus chose one day on a mountainside near the Sea of Galilee. These men left behind their occupations and families to dedicate themselves to this radical new teacher. They didn't know what kind of political, religious, or financial challenges they would face. Yet they followed Jesus.

Jesus asks the same of His people today. He asks each of us to follow Him, to love Him, to obey Him, and to tell others about Him. Like the apostles, we don't know what our commitment to Jesus might bring.

Lord, help us to follow You faithfully and to trust You completely with our future. —Dave Branon

*I am resolved to follow the Savior,*

*Faithful and true each day;*

*Heed what He sayeth, do what He willeth—*

*He is the living way. —Hartsough*

---

**Following Jesus is always right—but not always easy.**

June 23  
Wednesday

## WEED CONTROL

READ:  
Mark 4:13-20

---

The cares of this world,  
the deceitfulness of  
riches, and the desires  
for other things enter-  
ing in choke the Word.  
—Mark 4:19

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Esther 9-10  
■ Acts 7:1-21

The Parrotfeather is an attractive aquatic plant that looks like a forest of small fir trees growing on top of the water. In the springtime it produces a blanket of small, white flowers. But it's a noxious weed. It forms a dense mat of vegetation that covers the surface of lakes and ponds, crowding out native plants and destroying fish and wildlife habitat.

Recently I was hiking by a small lake in Washington State that was choked with Parrotfeather plants. It occurred to me that, like that weed, "the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful," as Jesus taught in Mark 4:13-20.

Jesus was talking about how unbelievers receive the gospel, but His words can apply to us as well. Sometimes when we read God's Word, our minds are taken up with troubles, worries, and fears. The pressure of things to be done today and concerns about tomorrow's decisions are "weeds" that can choke the Word and make it unprofitable.

To control the weeds, we must ask God to quiet our hearts so we can pay attention to Him (Psalm 46:10). When we turn our worries over to God, we'll be free to enjoy His presence and hear what He has to say. —David Roper

*The weeds will take over and choke out good fruit;  
But you can control them—just follow this plan:  
Make sure that the seed of God's Word has deep root,  
And pull out the weeds just as soon as you can. —Hess*

---

**To uproot the weeds of anxious care,  
get down on your knees.**

June 24  
Thursday

## THE MAKING OF US

READ:  
Hebrews 12:1-11

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Whom the LORD loves  
He chastens, and  
scourges every son  
whom He receives.  
—Hebrews 12:6

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Job 1-2  
■ Acts 7:22-43

When my husband was a child, his mother sometimes scolded and disciplined him for disobeying her. During one such scolding he said to her imploringly, "You must be nice to your little boy!" His words touched her tender heart. But because she loved him, she continued his discipline and training. Years later as a missionary, Bill was grateful for her tough love, for it was the making of him.

God also disciplines and trains His erring sons and daughters. He may do so directly (1 Corinthians 11:29-32), or He may allow life's hardships to melt us, mold us, and make us more like Jesus. In Hebrews 12:6, we're assured that "whom the LORD loves He chastens." Yet God's chastening

doesn't feel very loving. Sometimes we even think it's ruining us. But God's discipline is the very thing that will save us from the ruin of our selfish, stubborn ways.

Although we're unlikely to enjoy God's discipline, we're told that it trains us for right and holy living (vv.7-11). Rather than resisting God's correction, we can yield to Him, confident that His goal is our spiritual growth. Whatever our circumstances, God knows the seriousness of our difficulties and is working powerfully behind the scenes for our good.

His tough love is the making of us. —Joanie Yoder

*God's loving hand of discipline*

*May give us little rest;*

*His only purpose is our good—*

*He wants for us what's best. —D. De Haan*

---

**God's discipline is designed to make us like His Son.**

June 25  
Friday

## NEVER A QUITTER

READ:  
Galatians 6:6-10

---

Be steadfast . . . in the  
work of the Lord,  
knowing that your  
labor is not in vain.  
—1 Corinthians 15:58

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Job 3-4  
■ Acts 7:44-60

A preacher who was growing weary in the ministry had a dream. He saw himself pounding away at a huge chunk of granite with a pick-axe. It was his job to break it into small pieces. But hard as he tried, he couldn't chip off even a tiny piece. At last, tired and disappointed, he decided to give up.

Just then a stranger appeared and said, "Weren't you given orders to do that work? Your duty is to give your best regardless of what happens." The preacher, with a renewed determination, lifted the pick-axe high in the air and gave the granite a crushing blow. It broke into a thousand pieces. He had almost quit—one blow too soon.

The Lord wants us to keep working at our God-given task no matter how difficult it might be. Even when success seems remote or impossible, we are to remain steadfast, assured that there will be an ample reward for those who persevere.

Have you grown tired in your service for God? Have you become so discouraged that you're tempted to "throw in the towel"? Remember that preacher's dream. Better still, remember God's promise spoken by Paul: "Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:9). —Richard De Haan

*The service that we give to Christ,  
If steadfast we will be,  
Is sure to reap a rich reward  
That someday we will see. —Sper*

---

**Failure is not defeat unless you stop trying.**

June 26  
Saturday

## SIGN-SEEKERS

READ:  
Luke 11:29-32

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This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. —Luke 11:29

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Job 5-7

■ Acts 8:1-25

A skeptic once said to me, "I'll believe in Jesus if He comes down and appears visibly above my house." Not necessarily!

The Christ-rejecting religious leaders who requested a sign from Jesus had plenty of evidence for believing. They had undoubtedly heard of, if not seen, His miracles of healing, casting out demons, and even raising the dead. What more did they need?

Jesus therefore called them an "evil generation" (Luke 11:29). The only sign they would be given was the sign of Jonah the prophet, who had been thrown into a stormy sea (Jonah 1:2-3). When the Ninevites heard Jonah's message of repentance after he had spent 3 days in the belly of a fish, they

believed God had sent him and they repented.

Likewise, the religious leaders who already knew of Jesus' words and works would soon see Him crucified and securely entombed. And in the following weeks they would hear personal testimonies from those who had seen Him alive, and had even touched Him, but they still wouldn't believe.

Today we have in the Gospels a record of what Jesus said and did, written by people who knew Him. If we are open to the truth, we have all the evidence we need to believe. We don't need to be sign-seekers. —Herb Vander Lugt

*If we desire to honor God,*

*We take Him at His Word*

*And ask Him not for special signs,*

*But trust, "Thus saith the Lord." —D. De Haan*

---

**The sign of genuine faith is  
faith that needs no sign.**

June 27  
Sunday

## PSALMS, INCENSE, PRAISE

READ:  
Psalm 150

---

Let everything that has  
breath praise the LORD.  
—Psalm 150:6

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Job 8-10  
■ Acts 8:26-40

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord (Exodus 30:7-8). Our prayers are like incense to God (Psalm 141:2), bringing to His nostrils the pleasing scent of our adoration and need for Him.

*Let your breath be praise.* The book of Psalms concludes with the words, "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!" (Psalm 150:6). Talking about God and offering Him words of praise should be as natural to us as breathing.

Keep the Lord in your thoughts, prayers, and speech today. —Dave Egner

*Worship, praise, and adoration  
All belong to Jesus' name;  
Freely give your heart's devotion,  
Constantly His love proclaim.* —Anon.

---

**A heart filled with praise brings pleasure to God.**

The well-known English preacher Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892) wrote something that would be good to remember at the start of each day: "Let your thoughts be psalms, your prayers incense, and your breath praise." Let's look at each of these phrases.

*Let your thoughts be psalms.* The 150 psalms have a variety of themes, including praise, God's character, and expressions of dependence on the Lord. Throughout the day we can turn our thoughts into psalms by meditating on God's holiness, His worthiness of our worship, and how much we need Him.

*Let your prayers be incense.* In the tabernacle of the Jews, incense was burned continually to offer a sweet

June 28  
Monday

## EVER FEEL CONDEMNED?

READ:

1 John 3:16-20

---

God is greater than  
our heart, and knows  
all things.

—1 John 3:20

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Job 11-13

■ Acts 9:1-21

God knows us better than we know ourselves. He's aware of our weaknesses, the memories of sins that seem to predispose us to fail again and again. He knows our heredity and upbringing, the past and present influences that push us in the wrong direction. J. I. Packer calls these the "latent forces" of our existence as well as the "patent facts."

At my stage of Christian growth, I struggle with attitudes and actions over which I seem to have little control. I identify with Dostoevsky, who said, "It is nature asserting its rights." Paul called it "sin that dwells in me" (Romans 7:17). It has made me guilty of much, and capable of much more. That's why my heart sometimes condemns me, even though I'm a believer.

God knows all about the forces that drive me. He also knows the intent of my heart—that I want to love others and desire to do right. He knows my shame when I fail and is quick to forgive when I confess (1 John 1:9). This wonderful truth sets my heart at rest when I feel condemned, for "God is greater than my heart, and knows all things" (3:20).

If you have trusted Jesus as your Savior and your heart condemns you at times, remember that He knows all about it and still loves you. —David Roper

*No condemnation now I dread:*

*Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!*

*Alive in Him, my living Head,*

*And clothed in righteousness divine. —Wesley*

---

**Guilt is a burden God never intended  
His children to bear.**

June 29  
Tuesday

## It's A LONG STORY

READ:

2 Chronicles 36:11-17

---

He who is often  
rebuked, and hardens  
his neck, will suddenly  
be destroyed.

—Proverbs 29:1

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Job 14-16

■ Acts 9:22-43

In August 1989, a major fire broke out under an elevated section of New Jersey's Interstate 78. The intense heat buckled parts of the highway and forced the closing of the East Coast artery. The governor said it was the worst transportation crisis in years.

An investigation brought to light a longstanding problem. It revealed that the fire broke out in a dump site in which construction debris had been collecting for many years. The owners of the site had been convicted of a multimillion dollar conspiracy to allow the illegal dumping of construction debris. But appeals in federal and state courts frustrated New Jersey's efforts to clean up the area. Not until the day after the fire did a state appeals court finally order the operator of the dump to stop accepting trash and begin clearing the site.

That fire tells a basic story of life. Most of our problems don't just happen. They are the result of a long series of bad decisions. Second Chronicles 36 illustrates this and reminds us that God will not allow His children to continue in sin. Even though He is longsuffering, His patience has a limit. If we don't correct the problem ourselves, we can be sure that He will discipline us.

Let's clean up the trash in our lives today. —Mart De Haan

*Lord, help me see my hidden sin,  
Those secret wrongs that lurk within;  
I would confess them all to Thee—*

*Transparent I would always be. —D. De Haan*

---

**The most deadly sins do not leap upon us,  
they creep up on us.**



June 30  
Wednesday

## HOME BEFORE DARK

READ:  
Acts 20:17-25

None of these things  
move me; nor do I  
count my life dear to  
myself, so that I may  
finish my race with joy.  
—Acts 20:24

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Job 17-19  
■ Acts 10:1-23

Parents often tell their children, "Be home before dark." And in areas not served by electricity, travelers feel a pressing need to reach their destination while light still lingers in the sky. "Home before dark" means a successful journey and a safe arrival.

Robertson McQuilkin used this phrase to express his desire to remain faithful to the Lord throughout his spiritual journey. His prayer ended with the words "Lord, let me get home before dark." He explained this by first saying, "I fear . . . that I should end before I finish, or finish but not well. That I should stain Your honor, shame Your name, grieve Your loving heart. Few, they tell me, finish well."

McQuilkin's words echo the heart-felt longing of the apostle Paul as he faced danger ahead in Jerusalem: "None of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24).

It is God's word of grace (v.32) that encourages us to continue in faith, for it tells us that He is able to strengthen us until the end of our lives. So let's keep walking and trusting as we pray, "By Your grace, Father, I humbly ask You to help me get home before dark." —David McCasland

*Immortal words of truth we've read,  
So powerfully penned, so filled with grace,  
Will follow us through all our days  
And spur us on to win life's race. —D. De Haan*

---

**The race of life is run by faith and won by grace.**

July 1  
Thursday

## RESERVED FOR YOU

READ:  
1 Peter 1:3-9

You greatly rejoice,  
though now for a little  
while, if need be, you  
have been grieved by  
various trials.

—1 Peter 1:6

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Job 20-21

■ Acts 10:24-48

**H**ave you ever taken one of *those* vacations? You planned to arrive at a distant location where you knew you'd have a great time, but on the way you had so many traveling difficulties that you wondered if the journey was worth it.

Car problems. Traffic delays. Getting lost. Sick kids. Irritable fellow travelers. You knew the destination would be great, but the trip was anything but smooth. Yet you kept pressing on because you knew it would be worth the trouble.

That's a picture of the Christian life. Those who have trusted Jesus as Savior are on a journey filled with difficulties, setbacks, tragedies, and obstacles. Trouble always seems to be present or just around the corner. But we know that an indescribably great destination is in our future (1 Peter 1:4). And sometimes the assurance of what's reserved for us in heaven is all that keeps us going.

Peter understood. He said that as we make our way through life, we will suffer grief as a result of our troubles. Yet we can actually rejoice through our difficulties, because God has reserved something special for us at the end of the journey.

Troubled today? Look ahead. Heaven will be worth the trip. —Dave Branon

*It will be worth it all when we see Jesus,  
Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ;  
One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase,  
So bravely run the race till we see Christ. —Rusthoi*

---

**The gains of heaven will more than compensate us  
for the losses of earth.**

July 2  
Friday

## LOVE IS VULNERABLE

READ:  
Hosea 11:1-11

---

How can I give you up,  
Ephraim? . . . My heart  
churns within Me; My  
sympathy is stirred.  
—Hosea 11:8

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Job 22-24  
■ Acts 11

and all the wickedness associated with it. God had been a loving husband and father to them, but they had spurned His love. Although His holy character demanded that He chasten them, He also felt deep anguish.

Centuries later, God came to earth in the person of Jesus, who endured the agony of Calvary to bear the sins of the whole world. Yet many people still reject Him.

Yes, love is vulnerable, and there are no guarantees that it will be returned! But God continues to love, and in His strength we can do the same. —Herb Vander Lugt

*Your love, O God, would spare no pain*

*To conquer death and win;*

*You sent Your only Son to die*

*To rescue us from sin. —Gustafson*

The experience of a heartbroken Christian woman (I'll call her Mary) illustrates how love makes the lover vulnerable. Mary was a devoted wife who deeply loved her husband, but after 8 years and two children he left her for another woman. Her faith in God and her love for her children kept her going.

Today, her son is living a sinful lifestyle, and her daughter has abandoned her husband and children. Neither of them will have anything to do with their mother.

The prophet Hosea suffered a similar heartbreak because of his adulterous wife Gomer. What he experienced mirrors how God must have felt when His people turned to pagan idolatry

---

**Nothing costs as much as loving—except not loving.**

July 3  
Saturday

## GOOD MEDICINE

READ:  
Proverbs 17:17-22

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A merry heart does  
good, like medicine.  
—Proverbs 17:22

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Job 25-27  
■ Acts 12

1 In a *Better Homes and Gardens* article titled "Laugh Your Way to Good Health," Nick Gallo made an observation that echoes what Solomon wrote thousands of years ago: "A merry heart does good, like medicine" (Proverbs 17:22). Gallo said, "Humor is good medicine—and can actually help keep you in good health." He quoted William F. Fry, M.D., who describes laughter as "inner jogging" and says that it's good for a person's cardiovascular system.

Comparing laughter to exercise, Gallo pointed out that when a person laughs heartily several physical benefits occur. There's a temporary lowering of blood pressure, a decreased rate of breathing, and a reduction in muscle tension. He said that many people experience a "relaxed afterglow." He concluded, "An enduring sense of humor, especially combined with other inner resources such as faith and optimism, appears to be a potent force for better health."

Christians, above all others, should benefit from laughter because we have the greatest reason to be joyful. Our faith is firmly rooted in God, and our optimism is based on the assurance that our lives are under His wise control.

Don't be afraid to enjoy a good laugh—it's good medicine. —Richard De Haan

*Laughter is a remedy  
For sorrow and for care;  
It brings joy to troubled souls,  
To damaged hearts, repair. —Sper*

---

**He who laughs, lasts.**

July 4  
Sunday

## A STRONG CONSTITUTION

READ:  
1 Peter 2:1-10

You are a chosen  
generation, a royal  
priesthood, a holy  
nation, His own  
special people.  
—1 Peter 2:9

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Job 28-29  
■ Acts 13:1-25

The Declaration of Independence of the United States speaks of all people being "created equal" and that we are endowed with certain "unalienable rights." The Constitution guarantees that the government will protect those rights for all its citizens. These two documents clearly reveal that the nation's freedom depends largely on a strong constitution.

The Bible is a more far-reaching "bill of rights" than either of these documents. It originated with God, who backs it with His justice, His concern for all people, and His sovereignty. And it is the only charter that guarantees freedom from sin's penalty and power.

A man went to a clergyman to get some advice about religious virtue and the freedom it brings. "What must I do to attain holiness?" he asked. The pastor replied, "Follow your heart." Then he added, "To follow your heart you are going to need a strong constitution." "Which constitution?" asked the man. "The Bible!" said the pastor.

Peter said that Christians, as "a holy nation," are to "proclaim the praises of Him who called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). There we find true freedom. When we live by our "constitution," we will be able to enjoy our rights and fulfill our calling. —Dennis De Haan

*God's changeless Word will change our lives,*

*But we must do our part;*

*When we live out its principles,*

*We'll keep it in our heart. —Sper*

---

**The best constitution in the world is the Bible.**

July 5  
Monday

## FROZEN SNOWBALL

READ:

Hebrews 12:25-13:6

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We are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken.

—Hebrews 12:28

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Job 30-31

■ Acts 13:26-52

1  
The things we worry about have no eternal significance.

The writer of Hebrews was concerned about our perspective. Throughout the book, he keeps our eyes focused on heaven and away from earth. Unless our minds are on heaven, we will have little eternal influence on earth.

There will come a time when the earth will be shaken, and things that once seemed permanent will be gone (Hebrews 12:27). What you fear most today will be forgotten like yesterday's headlines. What really matters is what you do today that has a touch of eternity about it. —Haddon Robinson

*O for a heart that is willing to serve,  
Laboring while it is day!*

*Nothing is lost that is done for the Lord,  
He will reward and repay. —Anon.*

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**The one who lives for this life only  
will have eternity to regret it.**

Baseball pitcher Tug McGraw had a wonderful philosophy of pitching. He called it his "frozen snowball" theory. "If I come in to pitch with the bases loaded," Tug explained, "and heavy hitter Willie Stargell is at bat, there's no reason I want to throw the ball. But eventually I have to pitch. So I remind myself that in a few billion years the earth will become a frozen snowball hurtling through space, and nobody's going to care what Willie Stargell did with the bases loaded!"

The Bible tells us the earth will someday "melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10). Yet McGraw's point is valid: We need to keep life in perspective. Most of the

July 6  
Tuesday

## THE "WHAT THEN?" TEST

READ:  
Matthew 6:19-24

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Riches are not forever.  
—Proverbs 27:24

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Job 32-33  
■ Acts 14

From the 16th century comes a story of a probing conversation between an ambitious young man and a devout Christian named St. Philip Neri. The youth said to him excitedly, "My parents finally agreed to my studying law!" Philip asked simply, "What then?"

He replied, "Then I shall become a lawyer!" "And then?" pursued Philip. "Then I shall earn lots of money, buy a country house, get a carriage and horses, marry a beautiful woman, and lead a delightful life!" he responded.

Again Philip asked, "And then?" "Then . . ." The young man began reflecting for the first time on death and eternity. He realized that he had not acknowledged God in his plans

and was building his life on temporal values.

The point of this story is not that riches are wrong. But if they become our central goal, we are ignoring eternity and trusting money, not God. Jesus said it's impossible to love both money and God (Matthew 6:24), and He warned, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (vv.19-20).

Young and old alike must make important life-plans. But let's keep eternity in mind by always subjecting them to the "what then?" test. —Joanie Yoder

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

*Would you like to know what Jesus said about money?  
Read the online booklet Jesus' Parables About Money at  
[www.discoveryseries.org/hp981](http://www.discoveryseries.org/hp981)*

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**The true measure of our wealth  
is the treasure we have in heaven.**

July 7  
Wednesday

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE

READ:  
Luke 3:1-20

While Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. —Luke 3:2

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Job 34-35  
■ Acts 15:1-21

The answer is revealed in John the Baptist's message of repentance, his announcement of the coming Messiah (vv.16-17), and his bold confronting of Herod (v.19). John's role was to prepare the way for Jesus the Messiah, and the world was blessed by his obedience.

Today our task as Christians is to reflect the crucified and risen Savior in everything we do, and to tell others about Him. God calls each of us to live according to His instructions in the Bible. Our response will make all the difference in the world. —David McCasland

*The laws of God are true and right;  
They stand as firm today  
As when He put them in His Word  
And told us to obey. —Fasick*

Luke 3 opens with the names of seven men who exercised political, economic, and religious control over Israel: Roman Emperor Tiberias Caesar, Governor Pontius Pilate, the tetrarchs Herod, Philip, and Lysanias, along with high priests Annas and Caiaphas. While they were in power, "The word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (vv.2-3).

What possible difference could it make for a person with no money and power to respond to God's word when it seemed that others were so firmly in control? How could the actions of one insignificant person change anything?

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**Obedience to God is the key to a lasting influence.**



July 8  
Thursday

## INNER STRENGTH

READ:  
Ephesians 3:14-21

[I pray] that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man.  
—Ephesians 3:16

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Job 36-37  
■ Acts 15:22-41

us and keeps us from crumpling.

The Holy Spirit works to strengthen us and renew our minds as we read the Bible and pray. If we neglect the Scriptures, seldom talk with the Lord, and stop fellowshiping with other believers, we'll grow weak and vulnerable. Then we will be unable to withstand the pressures of temptation or trouble.

Let's ask the Lord to develop our inner strength so that when life's blows and burdens press upon us we will not cave in. —Dave Egner

*Help us, O Lord, when troubles come  
To trust Your Word and not succumb,  
And help us not to turn aside*

*But in Your strength and love abide. —D. De Haan*

A large company uses suction to extract contaminating substances from steel drums. Powerful pumps draw the materials out of the barrels, but the workers must carefully regulate the force of these pumps. If they take out too much air, the drums will collapse like paper cups, because the outer pressure will exceed the inner pressure.

Likewise, when adversity and hardship come into our lives, God must empower us from within or we will be unable to withstand the pressures from without. True, we get solid support from loved ones and Christian friends, but it is our spiritual inner man, "strengthened with might through His Spirit" (Ephesians 3:16), that sustains

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**The power of Christ within you is greater  
than the pressure of troubles around you.**

July 9  
Friday

## "PIGGIES"

READ:  
1 Peter 5:5-7

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[Cast] all your care  
upon Him, for He cares  
for you. — 1 Peter 5:7

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Job 38-40

■ Acts 16:1-21

I recall walking along a Texas creek many years ago with my brother-in-law Ed and his 3-year-old son David. David had been collecting smooth, round stones from the stream while we walked. He called them "piggies," because their rounded shape reminded him of little pigs.

David had stuffed a number of "piggies" in his pockets, and after running out of pockets he began carrying them in his arms. After a while he began to stagger under the load and lag behind. It was obvious he would never make it back to the house without help, so Ed said, "Here, David, let me carry your piggies."

Reluctance clouded David's face for a moment, and then it lit up. "I know,"

he said. "You carry me and I'll carry my piggies!"

I've often thought of that incident and my own childish insistence that I must carry my own load. Jesus offers to take all of my burdens but I resist out of stubbornness and pride. "You carry me," I say, "but I'll carry my 'piggies.'"

How foolish it is to try to carry all your burdens on your own when Jesus asks you to cast "all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

Have you put all of your "piggies" in Jesus' strong arms today? —David Roper

*I would tell the Lord my longings,  
Roll on Him my every care,  
Cast upon Him all my burdens,  
Burdens that I cannot bear. —Weigle*

---

**God cares.**

July 10  
Saturday

## MARRIAGE IN HEAVEN

READ:  
Mark 12:18-27

When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.  
—Mark 12:25

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Job 41-42  
■ Acts 16:22-40

brother of the deceased had to marry the widow for the purpose of having a son (Deuteronomy 25:5). According to their story, this happened with seven brothers. Jesus' detractors asked, "When they rise, whose wife will she be?" He said they neither understood the Scriptures nor God's power to raise the dead to a glorious new existence without marriage.

I believe that in heaven we will have special feelings for one another. We will love perfectly and enjoy complete healing from all the hurts of our earthly relationships. That will be more fulfilling than any marriage. —Herb Vander Lugt

*The love we've known while here below  
In heaven will find its highest joy,  
For we will know Christ's perfect love  
That memories cannot destroy.* —D. De Haan

When I was a student at Moody Bible Institute, I knew a professor whose wife had died. Later he married the widow of his best friend. One day a student asked him, "Will your first wife know about your second marriage when you see her in heaven, and if so, how do you think she'll react?" The professor smiled and said, "Of course she will, and because she will be perfect she will not be jealous. Even though we will not live as marriage partners, I believe we will know each other. We will all be the best of friends forever."

In Mark 12, we read about some enemies of Jesus who invented a story about a woman whose husband died and left no son. Under Jewish law, the

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**The pleasures of earth cannot compare  
to the joys of heaven.**

July 11  
Sunday

## THE TREE

READ:  
Matthew 27:27-35

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[Jesus] bore our sins  
in His own body on  
the tree.  
—1 Peter 2:24

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalms 1-3  
■ Acts 17:1-15

there's the tree in Psalm 1 that reminds us of the fruitfulness of godly living. And in Proverbs 3:18, wisdom is personified as a tree of life.

But it is a transplanted tree that is most important—the crude cross of Calvary that was hewn from a sturdy tree. There our Savior hung between heaven and earth to bear every sin of every generation on His shoulders. It stands above all trees as a symbol of love, sacrifice, and salvation.

At Calvary, God's only Son suffered a horrible death on a cross. That's the tree of life for us. —Dave Branon

*On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,  
The emblem of suffering and shame;  
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best  
For a world of lost sinners was slain. —Bennard*

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**The cross of Christ reveals man's sin at its worst  
and God's love at its best.**

The corkscrew willow tree stood vigil over our backyard for more than 20 years. It shaded all four of our children as they played in the yard, and it provided shelter for the neighborhood squirrels. But when springtime came and the tree didn't awaken from its winter slumber, it was time to bring it down.

Every day for a week I worked on that tree—first to fell it and then to chop two decades of growth into manageable pieces. It gave me a lot of time to think about trees.

I thought about the first tree—the one on which hung the forbidden fruit that Adam and Eve just couldn't resist (Genesis 3:6). God used that tree to test their loyalty and trust. Then

July 12  
Monday

## OVERCOMING GREED

READ:

1 Timothy 6:6-19

---

Let them do good, that  
they be rich in good  
works, ready to give,  
willing to share.  
—1 Timothy 6:18

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 4-6

■ Acts 17:16-34

**G**reed—it has toppled highly paid executives, brought down giant corporations, and cost thousands of workers their jobs and retirement funds. One columnist has written that unrestrained corporate greed is a greater threat than terrorism.

Greed whispers in our ear that we would be happier if we had more money, more things, and more power. It creates discontent and a growing desire to do whatever it takes to gain position and possessions. But the Bible commands us to trust in God, not in “uncertain riches” (1 Timothy 6:17).

Paul told Timothy that the way to overcome greed is to flee from it and to “pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness” (1 Timothy 6:11). And those “who are rich in this present age,” who have more than is needed, should “be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share” (vv.17-18).

Contentment and generosity are the opposite of greed (vv.6-8). As we learn to thank God for what we have and freely share it with others, we stop trying to fill the spiritual vacuum in our heart with things. And when we love Jesus more than money and possessions, we find that He is the greatest treasure of our lives. We discover that knowing Him is the source of genuine satisfaction. —David McCasland

*God's riches fill up our supply,*

*Whatever we may need,*

*So we can then be generous*

*And not controlled by greed. —Sper*

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**The best remedy for greed is generosity.**

July 13  
Tuesday

## NO GREATER LOVE

READ:

1 John 4:7-11

In this is love, not that  
we loved God, but that  
He loved us and sent  
His Son to be the propi-  
tiation for our sins.  
—1 John 4:10

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 7-9

■ Acts 18

On our family-room wall, in a small shadowbox, hangs a "treasure" that belongs to my wife Carolyn. Oh, we have things more intrinsically valuable on the walls of our home—a handmade quilt from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Kentucky, antique mirrors, oil paintings, and a magnificent dulcimer from an artisan in the back-country of Idaho.

Carolyn's treasure, though, is far more valuable to her than any other possession, for it contains a gift from our granddaughter Julia. It was a present to her "Nana" on Valentine's Day several years ago when Julia was only 6 years old—a small, red, clay heart. Inscribed on it in childish scrawl are the words "I Luv U."

The little heart is crudely made, ragged on the edges, and bears a number of thumbprints and smudges, but Carolyn has enshrined it in a frame made especially for that heart. Each day it reminds her of Julia's love.

Is God's love more valuable to you than silver or gold or any other possession? He "sent His only begotten Son into the world, that [you] might live through Him" (1 John 4:9). He did that because He loves you, not because you loved Him. And because of His love, one day you will be with Him in heaven. There is no greater love! —David Roper

*Love sent my Savior to die in my stead,*

*Why should He love me so?*

*Meekly to Calvary's cross He was led,*

*Why should He love me so? —Harkness*

---

**God's eternal love is the source of our eternal life.**

July 14  
Wednesday

## THE CLUE OF SILENCE

READ:  
Isaiah 53

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The chief priests  
accused Him of  
many things, but He  
answered nothing.  
—Mark 15:3

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalms 10–12  
■ Acts 19:1–20

The story *Silver Blaze* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle centers around a clue of silence. Detective Sherlock Holmes investigates the theft of a prized racehorse, which had been guarded by a watchdog. In gathering evidence, Holmes learns that the dog didn't bark during the intrusion. The detective deduces that the dog knew the culprit, and this leads to solving the crime.

For anyone investigating the identity of Jesus, the Bible holds many clues. One of them is His silence. Centuries before Jesus lived, the prophet Isaiah wrote of Him: "As a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth" (53:7). The significance of this remained obscure until Jesus was brought before His accusers and "answered nothing" (Mark 15:3).

It's a small but important piece of evidence, especially when combined with other clues: His birth in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Luke 2:4), His Davidic lineage (Isaiah 11:10; Luke 3:31), and the casting of lots for His clothes (Psalm 22:18; John 19:23–24). These and more than 200 other fulfilled prophecies provide overwhelming evidence of the identity of Jesus.

He is the Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior of all who put their faith in Him. —Dave Egner

### THINK ABOUT IT

*Are you convinced that Jesus is the promised Savior?  
Have you accepted the forgiveness and eternal life He  
offers? If you have doubts, read the gospel of John.*

---

**Believing Christ died—that's history;  
believing Christ died for me—that's salvation.**

July 15  
Thursday

## THE TRUTH ABOUT TRUTH

READ:

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

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... always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. —2 Timothy 3:7

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 13-15

■ Acts 19:21-41

In 1692, Harvard College adopted as its motto *Veritas Christo et Ecclesiae*—"Truth for Christ and the Church." Its crest showed three books, one face down to symbolize the limitation of human knowledge. But in recent decades that book has been turned face up to represent the unlimited capacity of the human mind. And the motto has been changed to *Veritas*—"Truth."

The pursuit of knowledge is praiseworthy, yet learning can quickly lead to pride and a refusal to acknowledge any limits on our mental abilities. When that happens, biblical truth is ignored or rejected.

What, then, is the truth about truth?

A wise king wrote centuries ago, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). We must recognize the relationship between God and truth. Without the help of the Holy Spirit and the instruction of God's Word, man will be ever "learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:7). When we acknowledge and obey His truth, however, we will be set free from spiritual ignorance and error (John 8:32; 17:17).

That's why we must be diligent in our study of the Bible (2 Timothy 2:15). It is the only book that tells us the truth about truth. —Vernon Grounds

*For Your holy Book we thank You;  
May its message be our guide,  
May we understand the wisdom  
Of the truth Your laws provide. —Carter*

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**Study God's written Word to know  
Christ the living Word.**



July 16  
Friday

## WITHOUT A BUMPER STICKER

READ:  
Acts 4:5-22

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They saw the boldness  
of Peter and John . . . .  
And they realized that  
they had been with  
Jesus. —Acts 4:13

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalms 16-17  
■ Acts 20:1-16

the good news of Christ. But their reaction caused their opponents to start thinking. Even though Peter and John were not highly educated, the people marveled at their bold witness and realized that these two men had been with Jesus. There was no need for a bumper sticker on the apostles' donkey. Their words and actions said it all.

Do you feel too untrained or timid to be a witness for God? If you'll spend time getting to know Jesus, He will empower you to impress others with Himself. You'll have boldness—without a bumper sticker. —Joanie Yoder

*For me 'twas not the truth you taught,  
To you so clear, to me so dim;  
But when you came to me, you brought  
A deeper sense of Him. —Clelland*

---

**Actions speak louder than bumper stickers.**

While driving in rush-hour traffic one day, I found myself behind a car with a bumper sticker. It had a yellow smiley face on it with these words: SMILE—JESUS LOVES YOU.

Suddenly another car squeezed in front of the "smiley" car, forcing the driver to hit the brakes. With that, he shook his fist angrily, displaying anything but a smiley face. I felt ashamed, until I remembered my own impatience as a driver. The incident reminded me that our actions and reactions, more than the display of a sticker on our car, show whether we really know the Lord Jesus.

Acts 4 tells us that Peter and John faced opposition from local rulers, elders, and scribes as they proclaimed

July 17  
Saturday

## THE ADAM LEGACY

READ:  
Romans 5:12-21

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By one Man's  
obedience many will  
be made righteous.  
—Romans 5:19

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalms 18-19  
■ Acts 20:17-38

**O**ur new grandson Jackson had fine features, soft blemish-free skin, and ten tiny fingers and toes on two little hands and feet. How could any proud Grampa not see him as a "perfect" baby? He certainly was a miracle of divine formation (Psalm 139:13-14).

The apostle Paul gave us a broader view of such "perfect" little infants when he wrote, "Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin . . . . Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam" (Romans 5:12-14). In other words, every child is born with a tendency to sin. But that's not Paul's

final word. He also wrote about Jesus, the "last Adam," who became a "life-giving spirit" (1 Corinthians 15:45).

Long after man's first sin, a baby was born who was God incarnate (John 1:14). God made Christ, "who knew no sin to be sin for us" (2 Corinthians 5:21). When we trust Jesus as our Savior, the Holy Spirit creates within us a new desire to do what is pleasing to God. The flesh still has its pull, but the pull of the Spirit is stronger.

In the "first Adam" we're all sinners. But let's concentrate on who we are in the "last Adam." —Dennis De Haan

*One with Adam are we all,  
One with Adam in his fall;  
But another Adam came—*

*Fallen sinners to reclaim. —D. De Haan*

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**If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;  
old things have passed away. —2 Corinthians 5:17**

July 18  
Sunday

## NEW SONGS

READ:  
Psalm 40:1-10

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He has put a new song  
in my mouth—praise  
to our God.  
—Psalm 40:3

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 20-22

■ Acts 21:1-17

The song of the humpback whale is one of the strangest in nature. It is a weird combination of high- and low-pitched groanings. Those who have studied the humpback whale say their songs are noteworthy because these giants of the deep are continually changing them. New patterns are added and old ones eliminated so that over a period of time the whale actually sings a whole new song.

There's a sense in which a Christian should be continually composing new songs of praise around the fresh mercies of God. Unfortunately, many of us just keep singing "the same old song."

We must repeatedly affirm the fundamentals of our faith. But as the psalmist tells us, the works of God's

deliverance in the lives of His people are many. His works, which are more than we can count, give us reasons to express our praise to Him in numerous ways (Psalm 40:5).

So why do we express our testimony of God's saving grace in the same old way year after year? A fresh experience of the mercies of the cross and of Christ's resurrection power should continually fill our hearts and minds with new songs.

The gospel story never changes—thank God for that. But our songs of praise should be ever new. —Mart De Haan

*God's blessings are too numerous  
To count them all at night;  
That's why we can give praise to Him  
As fresh as morning's light. —Sper*

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**Seeing God's work in our lives  
puts a new song on our lips.**

July 19  
Monday

## FAMILY TIE

READ:  
Ephesians 2:11-22

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The whole building,  
being fitted together,  
grows into a holy  
temple in the Lord.  
—Ephesians 2:21

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 23–25

■ Acts 21:18–40

over, gazed at the painting, and exclaimed, "I love Him too!" Although these men were from different churches, they felt a common bond because of their faith in Christ.

As believers, we need an awareness of our spiritual unity with other Christians. We need to focus on the fundamentals on which we agree—such as our love for the Savior who died for us—rather than bicker about lesser issues.

Regardless of sincere disagreements, we as blood-bought believers should recognize that we have a strong family tie in Christ. —Richard De Haan

*Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love!  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above. —Fawcett*

An elderly man who visited an art gallery was deeply moved by a painting that portrayed Christ on the cross. It was so realistic in depicting the suffering of the Savior that his heart was filled with gratitude for the great price the Lord Jesus paid for his redemption. With tears trickling down his cheeks, he exclaimed, "Bless Him! I love Him! I love Him!"

Other visitors standing nearby wondered what the man was talking about. One person walked over and looked at the painting. Soon he too felt deep emotion welling up in his heart. Turning to the old man, he gave him a firm handshake and said, "So do I! I love Him too!" The scene was repeated as a third man and then a fourth walked

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**As we draw near to Christ  
we are drawn near to each other.**

July 20  
Tuesday

## DOES GOD LOVE ME?

READ:  
Romans 5:6-11

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We love Him because  
He first loved us.  
—1 John 4:19

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalms 26–28  
■ Acts 22

It's not easy to understand the depth of God's love for us. Because of our pride and fear, we fail to grasp how undeserving we are and how free His love is.

At times I struggle with pride, so I tend to believe that I have earned any love I receive. Pride tells me that I am loved only when I am lovable, respectable, and worthy.

At other times I feel the tug of fear. Deep down inside, I know that I don't deserve the love I get. My motives are never pure, and I fear I will be rejected if they are exposed. So even while I am basking in acceptance, I live with the fear of being unmasked, revealing that I am much less than what others think me to be.

When I consider my relationship with God, therefore, I tend to feel that His affection for me is based on my performance. When I do well, He loves me; but if I foul up, then I expect only His scorn.

Yet God does not love us because we deserve it. He loves us in spite of what we are. In 1 John 4:10 we read, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son." Because of what Jesus Christ has done for us, we know we are always loved by God. That simple truth shatters our pride and dispels our fear. —Haddon Robinson

*Oh, such love, my soul, still ponder—*

*Love so great, so rich, so free!*

*Say, while lost in holy wonder,*

*"Why, O Lord, such love to me?" —Kent*

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**No one is beyond the reach of God's love.**

July 21  
Wednesday

## TRUTH SEEKERS

READ:  
Psalm 119:89-96

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I will never forget Your  
precepts, for by them  
You have given me life.  
—Psalm 119:93

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 29-30

■ Acts 23:1-15

Today she is a lawyer who works to protect her fellow Russian citizens from religious persecution. The message of God's love in Christ is spreading because this one woman was a truth seeker.

God's truth can have an impact on us and on the people with whom we interact. The psalmist wrote, "Unless Your law had been my delight, I would then have perished in my affliction. . . . By them You have given me life" (Psalm 119:92-93).

Let's make the Bible our delight. God will give us passion for His eternal Word if we are truth seekers. —Dave Branon

*The Word of God is truth;  
So when my faith grows dim,  
I look into His Word  
And trust my life to Him. —Hess*

The young woman's quest for God began when she was 11 years old, living under atheistic communism in the former Soviet Union. That's when she saw some artwork that depicted the baby Jesus. When she heard that this represented what authorities called a "myth" about God sending His Son to earth, she began to seek the truth.

She also heard that God had written a book of His truth, and she searched for a copy. It wasn't until she was almost 30 that she finally found a Bible she was permitted to read. At last she had the information she needed to trust Jesus as Savior.

From 1971 to 1989, this young woman risked her own safety to search for the truth of God's Word.

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**If you're searching for nuggets of truth,  
the Bible is a gold mine.**

July 22  
Thursday

## NO SALE

READ:  
Acts 8:9-25

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Peter said to him,  
"Your money perish  
with you, because you  
thought that the gift  
of God could be pur-  
chased with money!"  
—Acts 8:20

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 31–32

■ Acts 23:16–35

Police officers in St. Louis have had at least one easy arrest. It occurred at the back door of the police station when a drunk driver pulled his car right up to the booking window, thinking he was at Burger King. After attempting to place his order at what he thought was a drive-up window, the surprised driver was arrested by the booking officer and charged with drunk driving.

A man named Simon also got the surprise of his life. According to Acts 8, he was a former sorcerer in Samaria before becoming a follower of Christ. His surprise came when he walked up to the apostles and offered them money. He wanted them to give him the power to lay hands on people and

impart to them the Holy Spirit. The apostle Peter emphatically refused, and accused him of being under the influence of something worse than alcohol.

Peter wasn't overreacting. It's dangerous to think that the power of the Holy Spirit is like a product that can be bought and sold. The Spirit's work is a gift of God that is freely given on the basis of faith, and faith alone. He has given us His Spirit to accomplish His purposes, not ours. The Spirit cannot be bought or bargained for.

Thank You, Lord, for the gift of Your Spirit. —Mart De Haan

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

*To learn more about the work of the Holy Spirit, read  
the online booklet How Can I Be Filled With  
The Holy Spirit? at [www.discoveryseries.org/q0301](http://www.discoveryseries.org/q0301)*

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**We don't need more of the Spirit;  
the Spirit needs more of us.**

July 23  
Friday

## DYING DAILY

READ:

2 Corinthians 4:7-12

---

We are hard-pressed  
on every side, . . .  
always carrying about  
in the body the dying  
of the Lord Jesus.  
—2 Corinthians 4:8,10

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 33-34

■ Acts 24

Are you in a situation where you are often misunderstood for your faith in Christ? Are you surrounded by people with a carping, critical spirit? Do you get little or no credit for the work you do in your church or for your family?

The proper response is a willingness to have a humble and submissive spirit—to die as Jesus did throughout His life. Yes, our Lord died once on the cross; but in another sense He also died every day. The cross was the culmination of an entire lifetime of dying. He was willing to be misunderstood and maligned, to give up home and comforts, to take the role of a servant. That was His “death.” We must be willing to die in that way as well.

When we die with Him, God’s gift to us is “the life of Jesus” (2 Corinthians 4:10), the most attractive life ever lived. His beauty will gradually grow in us and become our beauty as well.

Remember this saying: “A picture is worth a thousand words.” The portrait you draw of Jesus with your humble, tranquil presence in the face of grievous wrong is worth many words on the subject. Some may see the life of Jesus revealed in you and long to enter into that life. That’s how dying daily can help bring life to another. —David Roper

*Dear Jesus, take my heart and hand,*

*And grant me this, I pray:*

*That I through Your sweet love may grow*

*More like You day by day. —Garrison*

---

**Living daily for Christ requires dying daily to self.**



July 24  
Saturday

## GOD FORGIVES DISOBEDIENCE

READ:  
Hosea 14

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I will heal their back-  
sliding. I will love them  
freely. —Hosea 14:4

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalms 35–36  
■ Acts 25

I'll never forget the painful lesson I learned in early childhood about disobedience. My father, who had been mowing our lawn, interrupted his work to go shopping. He left the push mower standing near some flowers and ordered me not to touch it while he was gone. But I disobeyed him and gave it a push. To my shock, the mower veered and knocked over several flowers.

When Dad returned, I blubbered, "I didn't mean to do it!" Wisely, he replied, "Why did you do it then?" I knew the truth—I did mean to push the mower. My sin wasn't that I mowed the flowers down, it was that I disobeyed my father.

This childhood lesson is a reminder to be sorry for disobedience and not just the consequences. Rather than blubber to God, "I didn't mean to do it," I do what Hosea told wayward Israel to do: "Take words [of repentance] with you, and return to the LORD" (Hosea 14:2). I tell the Lord honestly that I knew His will but chose to disobey, and I cry out for His mercy. Praise God, He forgives!

Are you grieved that you chose to disobey, and not merely sorry about the consequences? Then "take words with you, and return to the LORD" today. He promises to forgive you of your sin, for He loves you freely (v.4). —Joanie Yoder

*I've strayed, O Lord, and turned aside,  
I've disobeyed Your voice;*

*But now with contrite heart I turn  
And make Your will my choice. —D. De Haan*

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**Repentance keeps the way clear  
in our walk with God.**

July 25  
Sunday

## SAVING DYLAN

READ:  
John 9:1-12

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Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. —John 9:3

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalms 37-39  
■ Acts 26

The baby lay critically ill in the hospital, fighting to breathe. He had pneumonia, which made staying alive a struggle for his 8-month-old body. Doctors, nurses, and his family fought to save this weak baby boy.

Some people say he should never have made it to 8 months of age. Others say this precious child should not have been allowed to be born, or that he should have been left to die after he was born.

Why would anyone say this? For one simple reason: Dylan has Down syndrome. Through no fault of his own or of his parents, my great-nephew has an extra chromosome, and he will face some added struggles in his life.

But isn't his life worth as much as the life of a sick baby without an extra chromosome? Are we not all of equal value in the eyes of our Creator? Aren't we all deficient in some way? Our lack of perfection should remind us that no one has the right to judge another's worth.

Our imperfections are opportunities for God to work in our lives. That's what Jesus told His disciples when they asked why a man had been born blind. He said it happened so that "the works of God should be revealed in him" (John 9:3).

We're seeing God work in Dylan's life. That's what he's here for—just like the rest of us. —Dave Branon

*People in whom the world sees no value,  
But only as burdens to bear,  
Teach us great lessons of God's sovereign power—  
He loves them as treasures so rare. —Carbaugh*

---

**If God didn't have a purpose for us,  
we wouldn't be here.**

July 26  
Monday

## THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

READ:  
Psalm 34

---

Oh, taste and see that  
the LORD is good;  
blessed is the man who  
trusts in Him!  
—Psalm 34:8

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 40–42

■ Acts 27:1–26

expectation of happiness from without to a search for it from within." True, but we can find inner happiness only by knowing God personally and walking the path of trust and obedience.

Happiness isn't found by pursuing it. It's a by-product of seeking an ever-closer walk with God. When we do, we will find a depth of happiness no person or thing can give. That's what David referred to when he said, "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!" (Psalm 34:8). —Herb Vander Lugt

*Happiness is never found*

*When happiness is sought;*

*It's found instead in Jesus*

*And what His blood has bought. —D. De Haan*

---

**To know happiness, know God.**

In 1948, *Life* magazine brought together a group of labor-union representatives, industrial leaders, university scholars, and clergy to discuss what the framers of the United States Constitution had in mind when they referred to "the pursuit of happiness." They agreed that steady work under good conditions at a living wage was absolutely essential. Some included the values of racial fairness, unselfishness, and integrity.

This led one participant, a brilliant young woman who had been crippled by polio, to say, "It is my experience that suffering and pain are, unfortunately, great character builders—not that suffering is good in itself, but because it often helps to shift our

July 27  
Tuesday

## BOTH GLAD AND SAD

READ:  
Luke 12:16-21

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Do not lay up for  
yourselves treasures  
on earth, . . . but lay up  
for yourselves treasures  
in heaven.  
—Matthew 6:19-20

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalms 43-45  
■ Acts 27:27-44

of the promise that they would be both glad and sad. They were happy that they had picked up as many pebbles as they did, but sorry—so sorry—that they had not collected more.

I wonder if we will have a similar feeling when we get to heaven. We will be happy for the treasure we laid up in heaven while on earth, and joyful for the rewards Christ will give us. But we will also experience regret for not having done more to serve Him.

Let's make the most of our opportunities so that we'll be more glad than sad. —Richard De Haan

*The day will come when we will stand  
Before our Judge, God's Son;  
Have we so lived that He will say,  
"Well done, My child, well done"?* —Sper

There's an old legend about three men who were crossing a desert on horseback at night. As they approached a dry creek bed, they heard a voice commanding them to dismount, pick up some pebbles, put them in their pockets, and not look at them till the next morning. The men were promised that if they obeyed they would be both glad and sad. After they did as they were told, the three mounted their horses and went on their way.

As the first streaks of dawn began to spread across the sky, the men reached into their pockets to pull out the pebbles. To their great surprise, they had been transformed into diamonds, rubies, and other precious gems. It was then that they realized the significance

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**The crowns we wear in heaven  
must be won on earth.**

July 28  
Wednesday

## A MATTER OF TASTE

READ:  
2 Corinthians 6:1-7:1

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Let us cleanse ourselves  
from all filthiness of the  
flesh and spirit.  
—2 Corinthians 7:1

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalms 46-48  
■ Acts 28

develop a stronger hunger and thirst for righteousness. So the apostle pleaded with them to turn away from all filthiness (7:1). He reminded them that God wants His people to separate themselves from spiritual garbage.

If "cleanness" of heart sounds unappealing, perhaps we've been satisfied with the crumbs of our earthly desires. We need to learn to savor the flavor of godliness.

Father, forgive us for feeding the cravings of our sinful flesh. Help us to cultivate instead the tastes that Your Holy Spirit wants to produce in us. —Mart De Haan

*If we desire to taste what's good  
And lose our taste for sin,  
We must with ruthless honesty  
Expose the dirt within. —D. De Haan*

Two cockroaches decided to visit their favorite restaurant. While the larger of the two was enjoying his meal, the smaller one said, "You wouldn't believe the house I just left. It was spotless. The lady had to be a cleanaholic. Everything was immaculate—the sink, the counter, the floors. You couldn't find a crumb anywhere." The other cockroach stopped his munching, looked with some annoyance at his companion, and said, "Do you have to talk like that while I'm eating?"

This story about roaches can apply to human nature as well. The second letter to the Corinthians shows that Paul's readers had much to learn about clean living. They needed to

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**Sin cannot flourish where godliness is cultivated.**

July 29  
Thursday

## POWER OUTAGE

READ:  
2 Timothy 1:6-12

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God has not given us  
a spirit of fear, but of  
power and of love and  
of a sound mind.  
—2 Timothy 1:7

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalms 49-50  
■ Romans 1

The silence awakened me at 5:30 one morning. There was no gentle whirl of fan blades, no reassuring hum from the refrigerator downstairs. A glance out the window confirmed that a power outage had left everyone in our neighborhood without electricity just as they would be preparing for work.

I realized that alarm clocks would not sound, and there would be no TV news. Coffee makers, toasters, hair dryers, and many telephones would be useless. Beginning a day without power was simply an inconvenience and a disruption of routine—but it felt like a disaster.

Then I thought of how often I rush into the day without spiritual power. I spend more time reading the newspaper than the Bible. Talk radio replaces listening to the Spirit. I react to difficult people and circumstances in a spirit of fear rather than the spirit of “power and of love and of a sound mind” that God has given us (2 Timothy 1:7). I must appear as spiritually unkempt as a person who dressed and groomed in the dark.

Our power outage was short-lived, but the lesson remains of my need to begin each day by seeking the Lord. His strength is not for my success or well-being, but so that I will glorify Christ by living in His power. —David McCasland

*There's never a lack of God's power  
In prayer and reading His Word,  
For Jesus in heaven is listening—  
Your prayer will always be heard. —Hess*

---

**The human spirit fails us  
unless the Holy Spirit fills us.**

July 30  
Friday

## KEEP AT IT!

READ:  
Isaiah 55:6-13

---

My word . . . shall not  
return to Me void, but  
it shall accomplish  
what I please.  
—Isaiah 55:11

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalms 51-53  
■ Romans 2

**T**hey know Tom Dotson pretty well in the prisons of Michigan. They ought to. He spent more than a decade behind bars.

Tom gave his testimony at the annual banquet for prison chaplains in Muskegon, Michigan. He said he had grown up in a Christian home but had rebelled and rejected the gospel. His wife, who sang at the banquet, stayed with him in spite of his repeated failures. A prison chaplain faithfully worked with him, Tom genuinely surrendered to Jesus Christ, and his life was changed.

Dotson urged Christian workers, "Continue on in your ministry with people like me, no matter how frustrating. We may have lots of setbacks.

But don't give up. There's power for change in even the most frustrating person through the sacrifice of Christ, the One who really sets us free." Then, looking right at the chaplain who had patiently witnessed to him, Tom said tenderly, "Thank you for not giving up on me."

God will "abundantly pardon" all who come to Him (Isaiah 55:7). His powerful Word can bring change (v.11), freeing men and women from the prison of sin (John 8:32).

Are you about to give up on someone you think will never change? Don't! Keep at it! —Dave Egner

*Be not weary in well-doing,  
Though your labors cause you pain—  
There could never be a harvest  
Without sowing of the grain. —Anon.*

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**Instead of giving up on a person,  
give that person to God.**

July 31  
Saturday

## ALREADY, BUT NOT YET

READ:

Luke 10:1-12; 17-20

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[Jesus] said to them,  
"I saw Satan fall like  
lightning from heaven."  
—Luke 10:18

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 54-56

■ Romans 3

If Jesus has won the victory over sin, suffering, and death, why is it that we still sin, suffer, and die? To understand this seeming contradiction, we must recognize the "already, but not yet" tension of the gospel.

On the one hand, God's kingdom has already come in the person of Jesus. As the incarnate God-man, He died on the cross so that through His death and resurrection He might destroy the devil (Hebrews 2:14).

On the other hand, the perfect kingdom toward which He pointed awaits His personal return to earth. We experience the tension of living between the "already, but not yet" aspects of God's kingdom.

Luke 10 illustrates this tension. Upon returning from preaching, the disciples were jubilant. "Even the demons are subject to us in Your name," they told Jesus (Luke 10:17). He replied that He had seen Satan "fall like lightning from heaven" (v.18). He also assured them that nothing would hurt them (v.19). Yet many of them suffered and died as martyrs, and evil is still rampant today.

Even so, we can face whatever comes, for someday we'll enter fully into the victory Jesus has won. In the meantime, we can take comfort in knowing that nothing shall separate us from God's love (Romans 8:35-39). —Herb Vander Lugt

*God's kingdom has come in Jesus the king,  
He died and He rose, redemption to bring;  
Yet still we await the glorious day*

*When Satan and sin no longer hold sway. —D. De Haan*

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**Satan may win some battles,  
but he has already lost the war.**

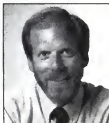


## Saying Farewell

On August 28, the staff of *Our Daily Bread* lost a dearly loved brother and managing editor. During his usual 5-mile lunchtime exercise run, Kurt De Haan fell into the arms of his Lord as the result of a heart attack.

Kurt was a vital part of the ministry that was founded by his grandfather Dr. M. R. De Haan in 1938. He faithfully led *ODB* for 13 years, and often wrote for other RBC publications.

A gifted editor and writer, Kurt had a sense of humor that was surpassed only by his gracious spirit. But most important, he was a good husband to Mary and a loving father to Katie, Anna, Claire, and Nathan.



**Kurt E. De Haan**

March 29, 1953–  
August 28, 2003

Although Kurt's death has left a deep hurt in our hearts, *ODB* remains in good hands. A qualified staff is providing the meticulous and heartfelt care this devotional deserves.

To honor Kurt's memory, we've included a devotional about his father's death that Kurt penned for our sister publication, *Soul Journey*. It appears on August 28, the anniversary of Kurt's passing.

After Kurt's homegoing, his co-workers found on his computer a screensaver picture of boats that reflected his love for sailing, and this rendering of Psalm 27:8 . . .

*My heart has heard you say, "Come and talk with Me."  
And my heart responds, "Lord, I am coming."*

And soon, Lord, we will come as well. Thanks, Kurt, for the legacy of a race well run.

M. R. De Haan II  
President, RBC Ministries

August 1  
Sunday

## A MASSIVE CELEBRATION

READ:  
Revelation 5:6-14

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Oh, worship the LORD  
in the beauty of  
holiness! Tremble  
before Him, all the  
earth. —Psalm 96:9

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalms 57-59  
■ Romans 4

We all love to have someone tell us, "Hey, great job. I appreciate you." And if several people tell us we are doing something right, that's even better.

God loves the praise of His people too, and He truly deserves it. Our most important work on earth is to exalt Him (Psalm 96:9), "that in all things God may be glorified" (1 Peter 4:11). It's our responsibility and privilege to worship, love, exalt, and serve the Lord.

Revelation 5:9-13 tells of a future day in heaven when believers from "every tribe and tongue and people and nation" who have been redeemed by Jesus' blood will surround His throne with praises. All of those indi-

viduals—multiplied over the millennia—add up to a mind-boggling congregation of God-glorifying people.

God's greatness is so overwhelming, so unfathomable, and so indescribable that millions and millions of people—all praising Him and bowing before Him in worship—will give Him the glory He deserves.

Even now, each of us can participate in celebrating God's majesty by glorifying Him with our lives. And one day we will join with people from every nation in that massive heavenly celebration. —Dave Branon

*Sing praise to God who reigns above,  
The God of all creation,  
The God of power, the God of love,  
The God of our salvation. —Schütz*

---

**We have all eternity to praise God—  
begin today.**

August 2  
Monday

## THE OIL OF HELPFULNESS

READ:  
Isaiah 61:1-3

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The LORD has anointed  
Me . . . to give them  
beauty for ashes, the  
oil of joy for mourning.  
—Isaiah 61:1,3

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 60-62

■ Romans 5

hope. Still others are mean and sin-hardened. Such people can become pliable toward the saving grace of Christ through regular applications of the oil of kindness.

When we receive Christ as our Savior and Lord, the Holy Spirit indwells us and equips us to bless others. If we're prepared to pour out God's oil of helpfulness every day and everywhere, beginning at home, we'll minister Christ's beauty and the oil of joy to many hurting people.

Perhaps the old man with the oil can wasn't so eccentric after all. —Joanie Yoder

### *PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE*

- *Lend a listening ear.*
- *Pause to pray specifically.*
- *Speak a word of encouragement.*

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**The human spirit can gain new hope  
from an encouraging word.**

There's a story of an eccentric old man who carried an oil can with him everywhere he went. If he passed through a squeaky door or a stiff gate, he applied oil to the hinges. His practice of lubricating made life easier for those who followed after him.

Nearly every day we encounter people whose lives creak and grate harshly with problems. In such situations we face two choices—either to aggravate their problems with a spirit of criticism or to lubricate their lives in the Spirit of Christ.

Some people we meet carry unbearable burdens and long for the oil of a sympathetic word. Others are defeated and feel like giving up. Just one drop of encouragement could restore their

August 3  
Tuesday

## OUT OF THE THORNS

READ:  
Hebrews 12:7-11

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No chastening seems  
to be joyful for the  
present, but painful.  
—Hebrews 12:11

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalms 63-65  
■ Romans 6

The gorse bush is a shrub that was imported from Europe and now grows wild in the Pacific Northwest. It has dense, dark green shoots, and in springtime it provides a dazzling display of fragrant, vibrant yellow flowers. But it's best known by hikers and fishermen for its vicious spines.

Remarkably, the flowers grow right out of the thorns.

Missionary and artist Lilius Trotter wrote, "The whole year round the thorn has been hardening and sharpening. Spring comes—the thorn does not drop off, it does not soften. There it is as uncompromising as ever, but half-way up appear two brown fuzzy balls, mere specks at first, that break at last—straight out of last year's thorn—into a blaze of golden glory."

So it is with the suffering that accompanies God's chastening. Just when our situation seems hopeless and hardest to bear, tiny signs of life appear that will soon burst into bloom. Take the toughest issue, the most difficult place. There, God in His grace can cause His beauty to be seen in you.

No chastening seems pleasant at the time, "Yet when it is all over we can see that it has quietly produced the fruit of real goodness in the characters of those who have accepted it in the right spirit" (Hebrews 12:11 PHILLIPS). —David Roper

*For all the heartaches and the tears,*

*For gloomy days and fruitless years*

*I do give thanks, for now I know*

*These were the things that helped me grow! —Crandlemire*

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**God's hand of discipline  
is a hand of love.**

August 4  
Wednesday

## MORNING, NOON, NIGHT

READ:  
Psalm 55:16-23

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Evening and morning  
and at noon I will pray,  
and cry aloud, and He  
shall hear my voice.  
—Psalm 55:17

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

- Psalms 66–67
- Romans 7

In May 2003, a powerful earthquake struck northern Algeria. TV news images showed distraught people searching the rubble for survivors, while others numbly visited hospitals and morgues to see if their loved ones were alive or dead. Families stood together weeping and crying out for help. Their burden of uncertainty and grief could be seen, heard, and felt.

If you've experienced an intense feeling of loss, you'll appreciate the words of David in Psalm 55, penned during a painful time in his life. Oppressed by the wicked, hated by his enemies, and betrayed by a friend, David spoke of the anxiety and anguish that threatened to crush his spirit: "Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me, and horror has overwhelmed me" (v.5).

But instead of caving in to fear, David poured out his heart to God: "As for me, I will call upon God, and the LORD shall save me. Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice" (vv.16-17).

Prayer lifts our eyes from personal tragedy to the compassion of God. It enables us to cast our burdens on the Lord instead of breaking under their weight. When our hearts are filled with pain, it's good to call on God in prayer—morning, noon, and night. —David McCasland

### THINKING IT OVER

*Difficult circumstances can motivate us to pray.*

*Read Jesus' Blueprint For Prayer at*

[www.discoveryseries.org/hj891](http://www.discoveryseries.org/hj891)

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**In prayer, God hears more than words;  
He listens to your heart.**

August 5  
Thursday

## IS LOVE A NAME FOR GOD?

READ:

1 John 4:11-21

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God is love, and he who  
abides in love abides in  
God, and God in him.  
—1 John 4:16

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 68-69

■ Romans 8:1-21

all the religions of the world." Was he right? Absolutely not!

John wrote that God is love (1 John 4:16). But he also recorded Jesus' words that God must be worshiped in spirit and in truth (John 4:24) and that He is "the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6). That sets Him above all other gods.

Love is not a name for God; love is God's nature. He expressed it to the fullest extent when He sent His Son to die for our sins (John 3:16). Only when we accept Christ's sacrifice for us will we know the love of the one true God that can bind people together. —Dennis De Haan

*When Jesus gave His life for me,  
Enduring all the agony  
Upon the cross of Calvary,  
He showed the love of God. —Sper*

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**God is love—but love is not God.**

Wilferd Peterson visited a mosque where a religious leader said, "There is no God save Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet."

Peterson considered that people have many names for God. Among the Hindus, it is Brahma. Jews and Christians call Him Jehovah. Ancient Greeks worshiped Zeus. But is there a universal name for God that will bring all people together?

Approaching the religious leader, he asked, "Would you agree that all men everywhere should think of God as love?" The man's face lit up. "That's it! That's what the whole world needs." Peterson wrote, "Give God the universal name of *Love* and we will create a golden cord to tie together the truths of

August 6  
Friday

## AFRAID OF THE DENTIST?

READ:

1 Samuel 12:6-25

Do not fear. You have done all this wickedness; yet do not turn aside from following the LORD.

—1 Samuel 12:20

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 70-71

■ Romans 8:22-39

(1 Samuel 12) were afraid because Samuel exposed their sin. But he also told them that God longed to forgive them.

We need to replace irrational fears with healthy ones. God's Word repeatedly assures us that the pain of going to Him is far less than the pain of avoiding Him. It also assures us that because of Jesus we can "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy" (Hebrews 4:16).

A dentist fills the holes in your teeth, but God wants to fill the holes in your heart—with Himself. Don't let your unhealthy fear stop Him. —Mart De Haan

*The love of God is my pillow,  
Soft and healing and wide;  
I rest my soul in its comfort,  
And in its calm I abide. —Long*

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**Only God can fill the emptiness of an aching heart.**

Why are so many people afraid of going to the dentist? It may be the result of a bad experience. One woman said of her childhood dentist, "I started getting upset and crying and he said, 'If you don't shut up, I'm going to slap you.'" She now drives 70 miles to The Dental Fears Clinic in Kansas City.

People who are afraid to go to God have a similar problem. Some may have been mistreated by spiritual leaders. Others may have learned unhealthy fear of God as children. Still others, overwhelmed by their sin, see only God's righteous demand for justice and miss the loving provision of His Son's sacrifice for sin.

The people in today's Bible reading (1 Samuel 12) were afraid because Samuel exposed their sin. But he also told them that God longed to forgive them.

August 7  
Saturday

## AN UNBROKEN CHAIN

READ:

2 Tim. 1:1-7; 2:1-2

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**The things that you  
have heard from me  
... commit these  
to faithful men.  
—2 Timothy 2:2**

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 72-73

■ Romans 9:1-15

faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (v.2).

The "faithful men" Paul had in mind were probably church elders, yet he was expressing a principle that applies to every believer. We had to receive the truth from someone; now it is our gracious privilege and solemn duty to transmit that truth to others.

Think of yourself as a link in the living chain that extends from the time Jesus lived on earth to the present. We must keep that chain strong by telling others about Him so that the gospel will reach to future generations. —Herb Vander Lugt

*Give me a passion for souls, dear Lord,  
A passion to save the lost;  
O that Thy love were by all adored,  
And welcomed at any cost. —Tovey*

Whenever I meet a Christian for the first time, I'm interested in learning how he came to trust Jesus as his Savior. Each person has a different story to tell, but they all testify that they learned the truth because of the efforts of others—their parents, pastors, Sunday school teachers, Bible club leaders, friends, writers. Someone has rightly observed that the body of Christ grows through "an unbroken chain of teachers."

In today's Scripture we learn that Timothy became a believer through the influence of his grandmother Lois, his mother Eunice, and the teaching of Paul (2 Timothy 1:5; 2:2). The apostle told Timothy to become part of that chain and "commit these truths to

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**The good news is meant to be shared.**



August 8  
Sunday

## "WE CUT THE COAL"

READ:  
Romans 16:1-16

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I commend to you  
Phoebe . . . ; for indeed  
she has been a helper  
of many and of myself  
also. —Romans 16:1-2

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalms 74-76  
■ Romans 9:16-33

equal pride and with equal right, 'We cut the coal.'"

Paul too recognized the vital importance of those who worked behind the scenes. Much of Romans 16 is dedicated to honoring some of his fellow workers in the faith—people such as Phoebe, Andronicus, and Urbanus—whom we would otherwise never know about. Their service was valuable to Paul and to the cause of reaching people for Christ.

Your labor for the Lord may be unseen and unheralded, but it is essential. Continue to "cut the coal." You are valuable to the Lord. —Dave Egner

*Use now what God has given you,  
Count not its worth as small;  
God does not ask of you great things,  
Just faithfulness—that's all! —Bosch*

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**Your little is a lot when you give your all.**

Winston Churchill knew that people who work behind the scenes don't always get the credit they deserve. During World War II, many of England's coal miners wanted to enlist and fight on the front lines. Churchill acknowledged their patriotism but reminded them of how valuable their work was to the cause of the war. "Some must stay in the pits," he said, "and others must stay in the army. Both are equally needed, and for both there is equal credit."

Looking ahead to when children would ask their parents what they did in the war, Churchill said, "One will say, 'I was a fighter pilot'; another will say, 'I was in the submarine service'; . . . and you in your turn will say with

August 9  
Monday

## STAY HOME AND KEEP THEM

READ:

James 1:21-27

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Be doers of the Word,  
and not hearers only.  
—James 1:22

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 77-78

■ Romans 10

A church member told his pastor that he was going to the Holy Land. He said that it was his intention to visit Mount Sinai. "In fact," he told the minister, "I plan to climb to the top of that mountain, and read the Ten Commandments aloud when I get there."

Thinking this would please the pastor, he was surprised to hear, "You know, I can think of something even better than that." The man responded, "You can, Pastor? And what might that be?"

He replied rather bluntly, "Instead of traveling thousands of miles to read the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, why not stay right here at home and keep them?"

God wants us to read His Word, of course. But more important, He wants us to obey it. So, as we open the Bible each day, we should pray not only for illumination to understand it but also for a willingness to obey it. Hearing and doing must go hand-in-hand (James 1:22).

When Saul heard Jesus speaking to him on the road to Damascus, he asked, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" (Acts 9:6). That's a good question for us to ask whenever we read the Bible or hear it read.

Let's be "doers of the Word." —Richard De Haan

*We take delight to read God's Word,*

*We say, "Ah, yes, it's true!"*

*But we must go beyond mere words*

*And seek His will to do. —D. De Haan*

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**The Spirit of God enables us  
to obey the Word of God.**

August 10  
Tuesday

## COUNTLESS WONDERS

READ:  
Job 9:1-10

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[God] does great things  
past finding out, yes,  
wonders without  
number. —Job 9:10

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 79-80

■ Romans 11:1-18

steadily rotating at tremendous speed. It is God who feeds the sparrow and dresses the lilies in their splendor. It is God who guides the feathered flocks southward in the autumn and then brings them north again in the spring.

Argue if you like that all these wonders are simply the operation of the laws of nature. But just as civil law is the expression of human will, so also natural law is the expression of God's will and wisdom.

As we see the wonders of creation all around us, let's worship the One who designed them. —Vernon Grounds

*This is my Father's world—  
The birds their carols raise;  
The morning light, the lily white  
Declare their Maker's praise. —Babcock*

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**In the wonders of creation  
we see God at work.**

When writer Aletha Lindstrom needs a lift for her spirits, she thinks of her favorite poetry book called *Who Tells The Crocuses It's Spring?* That prompts her to ask other questions like, "Who makes the trees turn all those beautiful colors in the autumn? Who splashes rain in shining puddles? Who makes the stars shimmer in the night?"

Such questions ought to stimulate our own grateful meditation. Centuries ago, Job exclaimed that it is God who "does great things past finding out, yes, wonders without number" (Job 9:10).

It is God who reminds the sun to rise at its appointed time every morning. It is God who keeps the earth

August 11  
Wednesday

## WHAT'S YOUR IDENTITY?

READ:

Galatians 3:26-4:7

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You are all sons of  
God through faith in  
Christ Jesus.

—Galatians 3:26

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 81-83

■ Romans 11:19-36

How do people identify you? Do they say, "Hey, there's the guy who sells cars." Or "That woman is a school teacher."

When our oldest daughter was little, she sang on a national children's radio program, and I liked being known as "Lisa Sue's dad." Since 1990, I've enjoyed being "The *Sports Spectrum* guy" because of my work with that magazine. We all have little titles that others use to identify us.

Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" (Mark 8:27). Some thought He was Elijah or another prophet. But those who knew Him best said, "You are the Christ" (v.29). That was the right label for the Savior of the world.

What are you called by those who know you best? Do they say, "He's a follower of Jesus—you can just tell"? It may depend on how you talk with people, how you treat your family, and the way you live.

The apostle Paul said we are all "sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26). That intimate identification with God the Father should naturally express itself to our friends and acquaintances.

Those closest to Jesus knew He was the Savior. Do those close to us know that we belong to Him? —Dave Branon

*THINKING IT OVER*

*Do you have difficulty sharing your faith in Jesus with others? Read How Can I Break The Silence?*

*at [www.discoveryseries.org/q0706](http://www.discoveryseries.org/q0706)*

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**Do those who know you  
know you are a Christian?**

August 12  
Thursday

## THE POWER OF LOVE

READ:  
Matthew 5:43-48

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Love your enemies, . . .  
and pray for those who  
spitefully use you and  
persecute you.  
—Matthew 5:44

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalms 84-86  
■ Romans 12

Fyodor Dostoevsky tells the story of brothers Ivan and Alyosha Karamazov. Alyosha is a devoted follower of Jesus; Ivan is a skeptic.

As the story unfolds, Ivan meets his brother at a café. In an effort to undermine the faith of Alyosha, he recites a lengthy poem he has written about the Grand Inquisitor. In it the Inquisitor rails at Jesus for His decision to grant free will to human beings and thus bring so much pain and suffering into the world.

As the Grand Inquisitor finishes his argument, Ivan portrays Jesus as having no answer. Instead, Jesus walks up to the Inquisitor and kisses him. Ivan hopes Alyosha will see this as an irrational act. But as he finishes speaking,

Alyosha, imitating Jesus, leans forward and kisses Ivan.

Alyosha's profound gesture completely changes the tenor of the scene, for it represents the triumph of love over doubt and skepticism. Love overrides every objection. No logical argument can overthrow it.

That's why Jesus calls us to love our enemies, and to do good to those who spitefully use us and persecute us (Matthew 5:44). Love, not rational argument, overcomes hatred. The goodness of God revealed in our love draws people to repentance. —David Roper

*Open my eyes, Lord, to people around me,*

*Help me to see them as You do above;*

*Give me the wisdom and strength to take action,*

*So I may show them Your wonderful love. —K. De Haan*

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**It's better to give others a piece of your heart  
than a piece of your mind.**

August 13  
Friday

## APPRECIATED

READ:  
Matthew 26:6-13

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Wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.  
—Matthew 26:13

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 87-88

■ Romans 13

The heroes and heroines of the Bible often take us by surprise. The woman in today's Scripture reading is a prime example. (John 12:3 tells us her name was Mary.) She was singled out by Jesus to be mentioned wherever the gospel is preached. Mary had scandalized some of those dining with Jesus by her lavish devotion as she anointed Him with perfume worth more than a year's wages. I believe Mary did this in anticipation of Jesus' death.

"Why this waste?" asked those at the table who expressed a concern for the poor (Matthew 26:8-9). If they had been attending Jesus' funeral rather than a dinner with Him, they may have reacted quite differently.

Yet, when Mary showed Him her extravagant love while He was alive, she was severely criticized for such waste.

We can learn a valuable lesson from Mary's devotion. We need to break out our best perfumes for the living. Yet all too often we wait until someone we know has died to show the appreciation that we fail to show in life.

Is there someone who comes to your mind, a friend or family member, who would be honored and encouraged by an expression of your love and appreciation? Then do something to show it—while the person is still alive. —Haddon Robinson

*Show love to others young and old,  
Encourage them while they are near;  
For when they've gone to their reward,  
Your loudest praise they will not hear.* —D. De Haan

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**Give praise to others while they are here;  
they won't need it in the hereafter.**

August 14  
Saturday

## THE BIBLE STANDS!

READ:  
Joshua 6:1-5,20

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By faith the walls of  
Jericho fell down after  
they were encircled  
for seven days.  
—Hebrews 11:30

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalms 89-90  
■ Romans 14

and indicates that the Israelites burned the city—both facts confirmed by the archaeological remains. Once again, archaeology bears testimony to the truthfulness of Scripture.

Our belief in the authenticity of the Bible does not depend on scientific research but on its claim to be God's Word. As 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." We can therefore have complete confidence in what it says.

It's a fact—the walls of Jericho did indeed fall. The Bible stands! —Richard De Haan

*The Bible stands like a mountain towering  
Far above the works of men;  
Its truth by none ever was refuted,  
And destroy it they never can. —Lillenas*

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To the wise, God's Word is sufficient.

Unbelievers have long scoffed at the biblical story of the fall of the ancient city of Jericho. That's why I was delighted to see this headline on the front page of the newspaper:

NEW STUDY BACKS BIBLICAL  
VERSION OF JERICHO'S DEMISE

The Associated Press article began, "The walls of Jericho did come tumbling down as recounted in the Bible, according to an archaeological study." Archaeologist Bryant G. Wood of the University of Toronto said, "When we compare the archaeological evidence at Jericho with the biblical narrative describing the Israelite destruction of Jericho, we find remarkable agreement." Wood noted that the Bible places the event after spring harvest

August 15  
Sunday

## THE TOTAL PACKAGE

READ:

Colossians 1:19-23

---

You were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit.

—1 Corinthians 6:20

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 91-93

■ Romans 15:1-13

our faith in Jesus Christ. When Jesus purchased us with His blood on the cross, He didn't get only a portion of us. He's not just the Lord of the religious stuff; He owns everything. So why do we sometimes live as if parts of us don't belong to Jesus? That's not fair to the buyer.

"You were bought at a price," Paul wrote. "Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Christ bought us—body, soul, and spirit. Let's make sure we let Him use the total package for His glory. —Dave Branon

*You have bought us, and no longer*

*Can we claim to be our own;*

*Giving freely, naught withholding,*

*We shall serve You, Lord, alone. —Murray*

---

Our family had lived in the same house for many years, and it was time for a change of scenery. When we finally discovered a house we liked, we began negotiating for its purchase.

We had to find out if the refrigerator stayed. And the stove. But we knew some things were not going to stay. The furniture didn't come with the house. And I jokingly wondered if we could keep the cars in the garage.

When you buy a house, you may not get the total package. The owner takes his belongings with him, although you may have the option to buy some of them.

Many things in life have purchase options. But that's not how it is with

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**Jesus gave His all;  
He deserves our all.**



August 16  
Monday

## THINK YOUNG

READ:  
Isaiah 40:25-31

---

Those who wait on the  
LORD shall renew their  
strength.  
—Isaiah 40:31

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalms 94-96  
■ Romans 15:14-33

That's a great attitude to have, but how can a Christian get it and keep it? The Bible says that our strength comes from a trusting relationship with God: "Those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

Our minds more than our bodies cause us to lose heart and give up. The young are not immune, because "even the youths shall faint and be weary" (v.30). God gives power to young and old who place their hope in Him. He stirs our spirits to run, walk, and soar for Him. —David McCasland

*We're often weary in life's race,  
Driven by its hurried pace,  
But when we wait upon the Lord,  
His strength becomes our sure reward.* —D. De Haan

---

**No one is old  
who is young at heart.**

In the book *Geeks and Geezers*, authors Warren Bennis and Robert Thomas present a fascinating look at "how era, values, and defining moments shape leaders" of two very different generations—the geeks (those 21-34) and the geezers (those over 70).

One of their findings is that among the older group of "geezers," every person who was able to continue to play a leadership role retained the qualities of curiosity, playfulness, eagerness, fearlessness, warmth, and energy. Instead of being defeated by time and age, they were "open, willing to take risks, hungry for knowledge and experience, courageous, eager to see what the new day brings."

That's a great attitude to have, but how can a Christian get it and keep it? The Bible says that our strength comes from a trusting relationship with God: "Those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

Our minds more than our bodies cause us to lose heart and give up. The young are not immune, because "even the youths shall faint and be weary" (v.30). God gives power to young and old who place their hope in Him. He stirs our spirits to run, walk, and soar for Him. —David McCasland

*We're often weary in life's race,  
Driven by its hurried pace,  
But when we wait upon the Lord,  
His strength becomes our sure reward.* —D. De Haan

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August 17  
Tuesday

## A ROCK-SOLID FOUNDATION

READ:  
Matthew 7:21-27

---

No other foundation  
can anyone lay than  
that which is laid,  
which is Jesus Christ.  
—1 Corinthians 3:11

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalms 97-99  
■ Romans 16

I prided myself on being self-reliant, and my brain was what I had relied on. Now the self with its brain was exposed as the shaky instrument it had always been. I was a Christian, even an ardent one in my worldly fashion, but now all the smoke was blown away, and I saw Truth close up." He resolved to keep Jesus at the center of his life and is now a different man.

How quickly we rely on our intellect and reasoning, only to find that it is a "shaky instrument." Let's never forget that Jesus is the only rock-solid foundation of truth on which we can always depend. —Herb Vander Lugt

*My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name. —Mote*

As Christians we can become so preoccupied with our earthly affairs that we shift our confidence from Jesus Christ to faith in our own intellect. Then something happens to shake the foundation on which we had been building.

Phillip E. Johnson, a gifted lawyer and primary spokesman for the Intelligent Design movement, suffered a stroke and was likely to have another. Plagued by frightening thoughts during those first few days after his stroke, he was profoundly touched when a friend came and sang, "On Christ, the solid rock, I stand—all other ground is sinking sand."

Johnson writes, "What was the solid rock on which I stood? I had always

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**Build your life on the solid foundation—  
Jesus Christ.**

## MEET THE TATES

READ:

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."  
—1 Corinthians 12:21

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 100-102

■ 1 Corinthians 1

Teamwork is essential in business and industry. To underscore this point, *Co-op Magazine* included this item: "You've heard of the corny Tate family. They pervade every organization. There is Dick Tate, who wants to run everything. Ro Tate tries to change everything. Agi Tate stirs up trouble whenever possible, and Irri Tate always lends him a hand.

"Whenever new ideas are suggested, Hesi Tate and Vegi Tate pour cold water on them. Imi Tate tries to mimic everyone, Devas Tate loves to be disruptive, and Poten Tate wants to be a big shot. But it's Facili Tate, Cogi Tate, and Medi Tate who always save the day and get everyone pulling together."

A one-man show doesn't get very far. But nowhere is this truth brought to a higher and more powerful fulfillment than in the body of Christ. The Scriptures teach that by God's design all who are in Christ have been made dependent on one another. We may think we can go it on our own, but we can't. We can't fulfill our high calling as members of the body of Christ until we begin to realize that we all have a vital part to play. We are family. We need one another.

Lord, help us to overcome our stubborn pride. Teach us to cooperate—for our sake and for Yours. —Mart De Haan

*If great and small work side by side*

*When it comes time to lend a hand,*

*And if they turn their backs on pride,*

*Christ's servant-heart they'll understand. —Branon*

---

**Coming together is a start; keeping together  
is progress; working together is success.**

August 19  
Thursday

## GRACE AND GLORY

READ:

Psalm 84:5-12

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The LORD will give  
grace and glory; no  
good thing will He  
withhold from those  
who walk uprightly.  
—Psalm 84:11

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 103–104

■ 1 Corinthians 2

body is breaking down under the weight of the years, there is a grace within that sustains me. I go now “from strength to strength,” and in good time I will appear “before God in Zion” (Psalm 84:7,11). That will be glory for me.

Our Lord gives “grace and glory,” the psalmist says—grace for our earthly walk and glory when we have finished it. “No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly” (v.11).

Do you need grace today? God gives it with both hands. All you have to do is take it. —David Roper

*When all my labors and trials are o'er,  
And I am safe on that beautiful shore,  
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore  
Will through the ages be glory for me. —Gabriel*

---

**God gives grace for this life  
and glory in the life to come.**

There's a circular path in the park where I walk behind our home in Boise, Idaho. When I've walked three times around, I've gone 1 mile.

It's easy to lose count of the laps on my 3-mile walk. So each morning I pick up nine small stones and put them in my pocket, discarding one each time I finish a lap.

I always feel good when there's one stone left in my pocket. It puts spring in my step. I pick up the pace.

It occurs to me that my walk through life is a lot like those daily walks. I've completed three-score and ten years and don't have far to go. That too puts spring in my step.

I'm in no hurry to leave this life, but my times are in God's hands. As the

August 20  
Friday

## TWICE IS ONCE TOO MANY

READ:

James 3:1-12

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With [our tongue]  
we bless our God and  
Father, and with it we  
curse men.

—James 3:9

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 105-106

■ 1 Corinthians 3

4:31-32). But we sometimes slip back into our old habit of letting both “fresh” and “bitter” words come from our lips in our conversations about others (James 3:8-12).

With my students, I go back to the basics to erase old habits. We train. We review. We practice. We eliminate the errors.

The Lord patiently continues to work with us about the way we speak of other people. As we listen to His training, learn from our mistakes, and depend on His power, we'll grow and change. —Dave Branon

*To be like Jesus—that's our goal,  
Though it doesn't happen fast;  
We trust the Spirit—He's our Guide,  
Till we're glorified at last. —Branon*

---

**To put failure behind you,  
face up to it.**

When I begin to grade the papers from the students in my college freshman writing class, I'm rather lenient about correcting their mistakes, hoping I won't see the same errors again.

But when the next paper contains the identical mistakes, I begin to get a little irritated. I expect the students to learn from their errors and avoid them the next time. Usually, though, it doesn't quite work that way.

Sounds like our Christian life. The Lord patiently reminds us through the Holy Spirit's presence, for example, that we shouldn't say negative things about others. He tells us to be kind and compassionate instead of fault-finding and vindictive (Ephesians

August 21  
Saturday

## A NEW SONG

READ:

Psalm 33:1-5

---

Make melody to Him  
with an instrument of  
ten strings. Sing to Him  
a new song.

—Psalm 33:2-3

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 107-109

■ 1 Corinthians 4

I was walking in the park one morning, listening to a tape by the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir. I had my ancient Walkman clipped to my belt and my headphones clamped over my ears, tuned in to another world. The music was joyous! Oblivious to my surroundings, I began to sing and dance.

Then I spied my neighbor, leaning against a tree with a bemused look on her face. She couldn't hear my music, but she was delighted by my behavior. I wish she could have heard my song.

I thought afterward of the new song God has placed in our hearts, a song we hear from another world. It tells us that God loves us and always will, and that He has "delivered us from the power of darkness" (Colossians 1:13) and "made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6). And someday He'll take us to be with Him forever.

In the meantime He has given us eternally useful things to do. Grace now and glory ahead! Is this not a reason to sing?

Next time you're down in the dumps, think about God's goodness. Tune in to the music of heaven and sing a new song with the angels. It may set your feet to dancing and cause great wonderment in those around you. Perhaps they'll want to hear the music too. —David Roper

*I'll sing with the ransomed a new song on high,*

*And all because Jesus my Savior is nigh;*

*The earth with its heartaches is all of the past,*

*For now I am home with my Savior at last. —Johnson*

---

**God's work in our life  
puts a new song in our heart.**

August 22  
Sunday

## THE HUMANITY OF JESUS

READ:  
Hebrews 2:9-18

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We do not have a  
High Priest who  
cannot sympathize  
with our weaknesses.  
—Hebrews 4:15

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalms 110–112  
■ 1 Corinthians 5

I once overheard this comment about a person who was always critical: "The trouble with him is that he's forgotten what it's like to be human!" How easily we forget our past struggles and become unsympathetic toward those who are struggling today. But there's one who hasn't forgotten what it's like to be human—Jesus.

In Hebrews 2:9-18, we "see" Jesus' humanity more fully. As a man, He was able by God's grace to experience death in our place. And during His earthly life Jesus was made perfect through His sufferings (v.10). But there's more. "Both [Jesus] who sanctifies and [we] who are being sanctified are all of one." Because of this oneness, Jesus is not ashamed to call

us brothers and sisters (v.11).

In a body like ours, Jesus lived, worked, and overcame every obstacle, so He knows what it's like to be one of us. Having passed through all these experiences without sinning, He then went to heaven and is now our approachable High Priest at the throne of grace (vv.17-18; 4:14-16).

We all need someone who knows what it's like to be human yet has limitless power to help us overcome our human weaknesses. Jesus is that one. He longs to hear us speak His name and ask for His help. —Joanie Yoder

### THINKING IT OVER

*Who was Jesus? Carpenter? Prophet? Teacher? King?  
Find out more by reading Who Is This Man Who Says  
He's God? at [www.discoveryseries.org/q0205](http://www.discoveryseries.org/q0205)*

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**No one understands like Jesus.**

August 23  
Monday

## TRAIN TO FINISH STRONG

READ:

1 Corinthians 9:19-27

I discipline my body  
and bring it into  
subjection, lest, when  
I have preached to  
others, I myself should  
become disqualified.  
—1 Corinthians 9:27

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 113-115

■ 1 Corinthians 6

Eighty years ago, Eric Liddell electrified the world by capturing an Olympic gold medal in the 400 meters—a race he was not expected to win. Liddell was the favorite at 100 meters, but he had withdrawn from that race months earlier after learning the qualifying heats would be on Sunday, a day he observed as one of worship and rest. Instead of lamenting his lost chance in the 100, he spent the next 6 months training for the 400—and set a new Olympic record.

Paul used a sports metaphor to emphasize the Christian's need for spiritual discipline. "Everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things" (1 Corinthians 9:25), that is, goes into strict training. "Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown." Paul longed to remain faithful to Christ even as he worked to bring the message of salvation to others (vv.19,27).

Throughout Liddell's life, he disciplined himself spiritually each day by spending time in God's Word and in prayer. He remained faithful until he died of a brain tumor in a Japanese internment camp during World War II.

Strengthened by the grace and power of God, Eric Liddell ran well and finished strong in the race of life. And so can we. —David McCasland

*To win the race of life in Christ,  
This must become our daily goal:  
To trust in God for grace and strength,  
For discipline and self-control. —Sper*

---

**In the race of life,  
it takes discipline to finish strong.**



August 24  
Tuesday

## LONELY, BUT NOT ALONE

READ:

John 16:25-33

You will be scattered,  
each to his own, and  
will leave Me alone.  
And yet I am not alone,  
because the Father is  
with Me. —John 16:32

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 116–118

■ 1 Corinthians 7:1-19

Her brief note to me spoke volumes. “I am a handicapped person in a wheelchair,” she wrote. “I am very lonely even though I know I’m never alone. God is always there. I don’t have a lot of people to talk to.”

*Loneliness* has been termed the most desolate word in the English language. It is no respecter of age, race, economic status, or intelligence. Albert Einstein said, “It is strange to be known so universally, and yet to be so lonely.”

God made us for intimacy and companionship with others. Even before sin entered the world, He declared that it is not good for man to be alone (Genesis 2:18). That’s why many people often feel so empty inside.

Jesus knew loneliness too. He surely must have felt it when His disciples deserted Him (Mark 14:50). The Father’s presence more than compensated for this, however. He said, “I am not alone, because the Father is with Me” (John 16:32). That intimacy with the Lord is available to all who put their trust in Him and His Word (14:16-23).

We can lessen our feelings of loneliness by reaching out to others. But even more important, we must reach out to the Lord. He is always with us, and He wants us to fellowship with Him throughout the day. —Dennis De Haan

*THINKING IT OVER*

*How can God’s plan for you include periods of loneliness? Read Lonely But Never Alone at*  
[www.discoveryseries.org/hp911](http://www.discoveryseries.org/hp911)

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**Those who know Jesus  
are never alone.**

August 25  
Wednesday

## HALF-BAKED CHRISTIANS

READ:  
Hosea 7

---

Ephraim is a cake  
untuned. . . . But they  
do not return to the  
LORD their God.  
—Hosea 7:8,10

---

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:  
■ Psalm 119:1-88  
■ 1 Corinthians 7:20-40

The prophet Hosea used the tribe of Ephraim as a poetic representation of the northern kingdom of Israel. In a colorful admonition, he wrote that Ephraim had become "a cake untuned" (Hosea 7:8).

In today's terminology, the prophet might have said that Ephraim was "half-baked." The people were like a pancake burned on one side but raw on the other. Although they took advantage of the Lord's goodness, they did not seek Him with their heart. When they needed help, they turned to other sources (vv.10-11,14-16). They had become tasteless and useless to God, so He was forced to judge them.

Jesus echoed the words of the prophet. Although He had gentle words for penitent sinners, He gave a scathing rebuke to the haughty and self-righteous who wanted to live as they pleased. He was furious at two-faced religious leaders who talked a good talk but turned around and exploited their followers (Matthew 23:13-30).

God is never soft on sin. He sent His only Son to redeem us from sin's penalty (John 3:16). Let's not be half-baked Christians, claiming God's forgiveness but still living as we please. The only fitting response to God's mercy and grace is to serve Him in humility and love. —Haddon Robinson

### THINKING IT THROUGH

*What is the basis of our salvation? (Ephesians 2:8-9).*

*How are we to respond to God's grace? (v.10).*

*How does God correct His children? (Hebrews 12:5-11).*

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**God's grace is not license to live as we please—  
it's liberty to please God.**

August 26  
Thursday

## A FAITHFUL FRIEND

READ:

2 Timothy 1:15-18

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A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.  
—Proverbs 17:17

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalm 119:89-176

■ 1 Corinthians 8

After one of my relatives had a stroke, she needed help to get around and could no longer remember recent events. One day, my wife Ginny suggested that we take her out to dinner. I wondered if we should, because afterward she wouldn't even remember what we had done. Ginny responded, "While we are with her she will know we love her." How true!

All of us need to know we are loved. I recall the answer I received when I asked a 90-year-old shut-in how his grandchildren were doing. He said, "I don't know. I never see them."

The apostle Paul was locked in a damp Roman dungeon, awaiting execution. He couldn't help but feel hurt that many former friends had deserted him. How grateful he was for the friendship of Onesiphorus!

This man left his family and an active ministry in Ephesus to befriend Paul. When he arrived in Rome, he searched diligently to find where Paul was imprisoned (2 Timothy 1:17). And he courageously visited the apostle again and again. Paul said of Onesiphorus, "He often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain" (v.16).

Remember, "A friend loves at all times," especially in adversity (Proverbs 17:17). Like Onesiphorus, let's commit ourselves to being faithful to our friends. —Herb Vander Lugt

*Someday I hope with you to stand  
Before the throne, at God's right hand,  
And say to you at journey's end,*

*"Praise God, you've been to me a friend." —Clark*

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**Adversity is the test of true friendship.**

August 27  
Friday

## A SURE THING

READ:

Genesis 2:8-17

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It is appointed for men  
to die once, but after  
this the judgment.  
—Hebrews 9:27

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 120-122

■ 1 Corinthians 9

wages of sin is death" (6:23).

It is therefore essential to live with the right perspective—that death follows life, and that after death comes the judgment. Everyone who trusts Christ for salvation will come forth from the grave "to the resurrection of life," but everyone who rejects Him will "come forth . . . to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:29). For unbelievers, death seals their doom. But for believers, death leads to glory.

Wise is the person who faces up to the certainty of death. And wiser still is the one who prepares for it. —Richard De Haan

*As sure as setting of the sun*

*In evening's western sky,*

*This life's brief day will soon be done*

*And we will have to die. —D. De Haan*

A man who was suffering from poor health decided to move to a warmer climate. Wanting to make sure he would choose the area best suited to his needs, he visited several locations. While in Arizona, he asked, "What's the average temperature?" "What about the humidity?" "How many days of sunshine are there?" When he asked, "What's the death rate?" he received this answer: "Same as where you come from, friend—one death for every birth."

In spite of medical progress in prolonging life and improving its quality, the death rate remains unchanged. "It is appointed for men to die once" (Hebrews 9:27), because "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23) and "the

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**Dying is the last page of time  
and the first page of eternity.**

August 28  
Saturday

## A TIME TO CRY

READ:

John 11:1-7,32-36

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Jesus wept.

— John 11:35

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 123-125

■ 1 Corinthians 10:1-18

and was troubled" (v.33). Jesus truly felt their heartache.

When someone we love dies, we struggle with a wide range of emotions. If a young person dies, we ask "Why?" When death comes after long-term suffering, we struggle to understand why the Lord waited so long to bring relief. We begin to think of God as distant, untouched by our sorrow. We may question His wisdom or His goodness. Then we read, "Jesus wept." God is deeply touched by our anguish.

When a painful situation invades your life, remember the Bible's shortest verse. Jesus shed tears too. —Kurt De Haan

*One year ago today, Kurt De Haan,  
managing editor of Our Daily Bread for 13 years,  
was reunited with his father when God called him Home.  
(March 29, 1953–August 28, 2003)*

**M**y father (Richard De Haan) had been battling a debilitating disease for many years. We asked the Lord to take him home. But as I knelt by his bed and watched him take that last breath, the tears I had choked back on other occasions came out like a flood. As my brothers and my mother hugged and prayed, the finality was overwhelming.

That event helped me understand the significance of the shortest verse in the Bible: "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). God the Son wept! He knew the reality of heaven. He was the source of all hope of a future day of resurrection. And yet, Jesus cried. He loved His friends Mary and Martha and Lazarus so much that "He groaned in the spirit

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**If you doubt that Jesus cares,  
remember His tears.**

August 29  
Sunday

## DAILY BREAD

READ:

Leviticus 24:1-9

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I am the living bread  
which came down from  
heaven. If anyone eats  
of this bread, he will  
live forever.  
—John 6:51

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 126–128

■ 1 Corinthians 10:19–33

(Matthew 5:6; 6:31–34).

For the believer in Christ, bread may represent the Bible, Jesus, Christian fellowship, or any of the provisions God has made for our spiritual needs. He cares for us and He's ready to feed us, but His offer is not unconditional. He promised to provide daily "bread" for those who in obedience have separated themselves to live and to eat from the hand of God.

The Lord cares for all who willingly and humbly receive their physical and spiritual food from Him. —Mart De Haan

*In You, O Lord, we take delight,  
Our every need You can supply;  
We long to do what's true and right,  
So, Lord, on You we will rely.* —D. De Haan

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**Only Christ the Living Bread  
can satisfy our spiritual hunger.**

Bread has come to be regarded as something less than what it was in Bible times. We don't usually think of it as a symbol of life's necessities. In Jesus' day, however, bread represented nourishment in all its many forms.

This helps us understand why the Lord told Israel to put bread in the Holy Place of the tabernacle—His "house of symbols." There in that first room, 12 loaves were to be displayed on a golden table "before the LORD" (Leviticus 24:6). Those loaves reminded Israel that God always provides for His own when they come to Him on His terms. The bread reflected God's promise to provide for all who hunger and thirst for righteousness

August 30  
Monday

## GROUND SQUIRRELS

READ:

Romans 8:27-39

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I was at ease, but  
He has shattered me.  
—Job 16:12

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 129–131

■ 1 Corinthians 11:1-16

Ground squirrels hibernate near our home during the winter, and they reappear when the snow melts in the spring. My wife Carolyn and I enjoy watching them scurry back and forth from one hole to another, while others stand like tiny sentries watching for predators.

In mid-May, a man from a nearby golf course arrives on a little green tractor with a tank loaded with lethal gas. The groundskeeper tells us that these little critters have to be eliminated because they dig holes in the fairways. Some survive, but most do not. It always makes us a little sad to see the tractor arrive.

If I could, I'd chase the little animals away. I'd destroy their holes and force them to settle someplace else. I'm sure they would resent my interference, but my actions would be solely for their good.

So it is with God. He may break up our comfortable nests now and then, but behind every difficult change lies His love and eternal purpose. He is not cruel or capricious; He is working for our ultimate good (Romans 8:28). He wants us to be "conformed to the image of His Son" (v.29) and to give us glorious enjoyment in heaven forever. How then can we fear change when it comes from Someone whose love for us never changes? (vv.38-39). —David Roper

*What tenderness the Father shows  
To sinners in their pain!*

*He grants to them His strength to bear  
The hurt that brings them gain. —D. De Haan*

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**God's love can seem harsh  
until we view it with hindsight.**

August 31  
Tuesday

## BE GLAD FOR TODAY

READ:

**Psalm 118:14-24**

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This is the day the  
LORD has made; we  
will rejoice and be  
glad in it.

—Psalm 118:24

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THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

■ Psalms 132-134

■ 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Edith Schaeffer, in her book *The Tapestry*, describes a summer when her husband Francis was away in Europe for 3 months. During that time of missing him greatly, Edith and her sister Janet took their children to live in a former schoolhouse on Cape Cod. On a shoestring budget they shared the rent, lived without a car, and created daily adventures for the five young children.

Looking back years later, Edith said of that summer: "Never again have I spent time of that sort with my own children or my sister and nephews. The sudden precious moments in life need to be recognized for the unique periods they are, not wasted by wishing for something else."

Edith's perspective offers us a key to applying the words of Psalm 118:24, "This is the day the LORD has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." During difficult times, we are tempted to become passive while waiting for a storm of life to pass. But God invites us to actively pursue the opportunities at hand instead of lamenting over what we don't have.

Because the Lord has made this day, we can look past the closed doors to see people and opportunities we had previously overlooked. In celebrating their value, we will discover joy and gladness from God. —David McCasland

*The God who put us here on earth  
Knows life is tinged with sadness,  
And so He gives us many things  
To fill our hearts with gladness. —Hess*

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**You don't have to worry about eyestrain  
from looking on the brighter side of life.**



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June • July • August 2004

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## Does God Grade On A Curve?

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God offers us the gift of eternal life out of His great love for us. If we attempt to pay for it by working our way to heaven, or by trying to do better than the next guy, we will always fall short (Romans 3:23).

The curve of personal merit doesn't work. Outwardly we may maintain the appearance of being an upstanding individual. But inwardly we all have a dark side that sabotages our best intentions (Romans 7:21-25).

There is good news. It is God's grace.

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).*

How is God able to provide the gift of salvation? The consequence for sin is death (Romans 6:23). So God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ. When Jesus died on the cross, He paid for all our wrongs. By rising from the dead, He showed His claims were true. Now He offers each of us eternal life.

Have you gotten off the hopeless treadmill of working your way to heaven? You can, simply by asking Jesus to be your personal Savior. He gives His assurance of eternal life to anyone who comes to Him. This is the wonderful news of the Bible.



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